

RYLES PARK HIGH

### Job Description

Name: Sam Hulme  
Job Title: Teaching Assistant  
Grade:  
Hours P/W: 32.5 hours per week  
School: Ryles Park High School, Macclesfield  
Accountable To:

**Job Purpose:** To enhance the learning of pupils who have a wide range of learning needs; by supporting the teaching staff in enabling the pupils to gain independence and participate fully in the curriculum and general life of the school. To be adaptable, have empathy but also follow the school's positive discipline guidelines.

### Duties and Responsibilities

#### *Support for the pupil*

Central to the whole principle of inclusion – those children who have learning or physical difficulties should be helped to work independently in the company of other children across the curriculum.

#### *Support for the teachers*

To develop a mutually supportive relationship with all teaching staff. Endeavour to help pupils gain access to the curriculum by differentiating instructions and resources. Assisting pupils to become better learners by discreetly prompting them to stay 'on task.'

#### *Support for the curriculum*

Support the delivery of the Literacy and Mathematics strategy along with other aspects of both the National Curriculum and the enhanced curriculum offered by the school.

#### *Support for the school*

To work as part of a flexible and supportive team to further the ethos of the school. To undertake relevant training to enhance personal development and to use the knowledge to benefit the school. To attend half-termly TA meetings to develop and disseminate good practice.

#### *Key accountabilities*

- To continue as the TA responsible for pupils with physical difficulties and hearing impairments, by organising relevant appointments with various outside agencies.
- To continue as the link liaison person within the Physical Education Department, by attending all relevant meetings, held both in and out of school.
- Testing, running and monitoring of all pupils who attend the Motor Co-ordination club, which runs over lunchtimes.

Signature of post holder .....  
Signature of line manager .....  
Date.....

I wish the following contributions to the school community to be recognised:

- Designing and producing 'Key Words' for both practical and theory lessons for the Physical Education Department.
- Lunchtime – Motor Co-ordination Club, 5 sessions per week (every day).
- Running badminton club after school.
- Support Dance 2000 workshop.
- 'Support Staff' Governer.
- Vice chairperson of Lower School Council.
- Monitoring of and tutorials for pupils who use personal lap top computers.
- Attend 'Open Evenings' to support the PE department.
- Involvement with Manchester University / DfEE 'Research Project' regarding the role of the Teaching Assistants.
- Member of the Staff Association.
- Evening – supporting ICT/homework club, 1 session each week.

Key Accountabilities and Personal Contributions sections of the job description will be reviewed annually by.....(appointed member of staff) to allow for any amendments that you may wish to make.

**I may be required to do any of the following tasks on a daily basis.**

- Supporting individual students and whole classes across the full curriculum.
- Support a Registration Class and carry out associated duties.
- Mentoring: supporting individual students with emotional problems.
- Exam invigilation, amanuensis and assistance.
- Prepare and teach literacy / numeracy lessons to small groups of pupils.
- Displaying students' work to create a stimulating environment and raise students' self-esteem.
- Rewarding and disciplining students in accordance with the School's policy of 'Positive Discipline', e.g. writing and sending 'good news cards', issuing merit marks, phone calls home, good and mis-conduct forms.
- Following up 'late' or 'missing' students.
- Withdrawing and escorting disruptive students to SMT as and when necessary (usually at teacher's request).
- Recording class notes for students who attend Speech/Physiotherapy sessions.
- Photocopying and differentiating resources and worksheets.
- Assisting with the setting up and clearing away of equipment in practical areas.
- Accompanying students on educational trips 'off site'
- Attending and participating in meetings: whole school and department.
- Undertaking training in order to upgrade/learn skills as required.
- Participate in INSET days.

**VAUGHAN NURSERY, FIRST AND MIDDLE SCHOOL  
MANCHESTER PROJECT**

Vaughan School has been involved in the Manchester Project for most of the time in which I have been working as a Learning Support Assistant in the school. My job as a LSA is also new to me as I am returning to work following three years without paid employment, bringing up my two young children.

Participation in the project appears to have assisted the school in examining the role of an LSA and defining it more clearly. I have found it interesting to note the comments from those who have been 'in the job' for a number of years and who have often stated how dramatically the role has changed over that time.

It is rewarding to be offered the choice to discuss together 'where we are now' and 'where we would like to be!' We have recently updated our job descriptions, which encourages a feeling of self-awareness and satisfaction when the many facets to this work are clearly stated.

We were all fully aware of what our jobs and duties included, but none of us was particularly happy with our existing job description so at one of our meetings we decided we were going to attempt to re-write our job descriptions.

We split into 2 groups –

1. LSA working with special needs (working 1 to 1).
2. LSAs with welfare duties.

Over a number of sessions we looked at our existing job description which generally included most of our duties, but we all felt it wasn't enough to cover what our actual duties were now, i.e. preparing differentiated resources if required, providing feedback written/orally to classteacher – most of us were now providing written feedback, so we felt this should be part of our new job description.

As part of a group of LSAs with Welfare Duties we:

1. Brainstormed on things we all did in general.
2. Looked at job descriptions from other schools (we are one of a very few schools that have a dual role) and made comparisons.

It was an enjoyable challenge – listing the various jobs we were all doing and whittling them down into what was more a general description to fit into a job description – we felt we couldn't jot down everything that we did as it started becoming too personal and we would end up with too many job descriptions and unnecessary complications.

Job. Desc. 1999.

*Puss Bank Nursery and Infant School*  
*Job description [before research project]*  
**Teaching Assistant**

**Purpose of the Job**

Classroom Assistants are employed in each department of the school and work in partnership with the class teachers to provide a supportive and stimulating educational environment for pupils.

Classroom Assistants spend the majority of their time working directly with pupils under the direction of the class teacher but also have an important role to play in developing displays and resources to enhance pupils' learning.

All children have individual needs and it is the responsibility of staff to respond with sensitivity to the requirements of pupils enabling them to gain maximum benefit from the opportunities available in school. Classroom Assistants play a vital role in children's education by supporting the implementation of the curriculum and meeting the pastoral needs of children in their care.

**Curriculum Support**

The Classroom Assistant will be expected to:

- use their knowledge of child development to guide and extend the child's first hand experience and help them to cope with the social and educational demands of school life.
- help the children develop and sustain good attention and listening skills and comply with the behavioural expectations of the school environment.
- foster language development and assist in the implementation of Language Programmes devised by the class teacher or Speech and Language Therapy Staff.
- assist in the implementation of Individual Education Plans and Individual Behaviour Plans under the direction of the class teacher and SENCO.
- monitor each child's progress, record findings and discuss observations with teaching staff, the Headteacher and parents as appropriate.
- prepare for and assist in the structuring of activities to foster social interaction and play skills both in the classroom and in the playground.
- work with teaching staff to develop and implement short, medium and long term planning in all areas of the curriculum.
- make resources and implement activities appropriate to the identified needs of individual pupils.
- ensure resources and examples of work are displayed appropriately.
- assist in the care and usage of audio visual equipment.

See *Teaching Assistants*, page 54

- prepare and repair equipment, apparatus and books as requested.

### **Pastoral Care**

The Classroom Assistant should provide appropriate physical and emotional support to children which could include:

- supporting children on admission to school to help them cope with the routines associated with the school day and encourage the development of friendships.
- providing assistance with mealtimes and snack times.
- helping children to dress and undress when necessary.
- assisting with fire drill and any other safety procedures.
- helping with toileting, changing pupils as necessary and encouraging children to gain independence in basic self help skills.
- cleaning and dressing cuts, bruises and scratches sustained by children.
- looking after children who are sick and comforting distressed children.
- being aware of each child's general well being and alert to possible child protection issues, discussing concerns with the class teacher.

### **Participation in the wider life of the school**

- attend whole school staff meetings and training days at the direction of the Headteacher.
- support the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs within the wider school community.
- assist teaching staff in the supervision of students monitoring performance in the classroom and ensuring they complete course work to a good standard.
- help maintain the aesthetic appearance of the school.

Puss Bank School  
**Special Needs Department**  
Job Description [after research project]

Job Title: Specialist Teaching Assistant  
Grade:  
Responsible to: The Governors of Puss Bank School via the Headteacher  
Assistant Headteacher, Special Educational Needs.  
Liaises with: Class teacher

**Purpose of the Job**

Teaching Assistants are employed in each department of the school and work in partnership with the class teachers to provide a supportive and stimulating educational environment for pupils.

Teaching Assistants spend the majority of their time working directly with pupils under the direction of the class teacher but also have an important role to play in developing equipment and resources to enhance pupils' learning.

All children have individual needs and it is the responsibility of staff to respond with sensitivity to the requirements of pupils enabling them to gain maximum benefit from the opportunities available in school. Teaching Assistants play a vital role in children's education by supporting the implementation of the curriculum and meeting the pastoral needs of children in their care.

**Duties and Responsibilities**

*Support for the pupils*

Use their knowledge of child development to guide and extend the child's first-hand experience and help them to cope with the social and educational demands of school life.

Use their knowledge of the educational needs of individual pupils to help the children learn as effectively as possible both in group situations and in individual work.

Ensure pupils have access to any relevant specialist equipment, such as hearing aids or adapted seating, check that equipment is clean and in good working order and notify teaching staff of items in need of repair.

Help the children develop and sustain good attention and listening skills and comply with the behavioural expectations of the school environment.

Foster language development and assist in the implementation of Language Programmes devised by the class teacher or Speech and Language Therapy Staff.

Prepare for and assist with the implementation of activities to foster social interaction and play skills both in the classroom and in the playground.

Help children learn the routines associated with the school day and encourage them to take responsibility for their own belongings.

Help with toileting, changing pupils as necessary and encouraging children to gain independence with self help skills.

Provide assistance with basic skills such as feeding and dressing as appropriate during the school day.

See *Teaching Assistants*, page 54

#### *Support for the teacher*

Work in conjunction with the class teacher to observe and assess pupils, in accordance with class policies.

Assist in the implementation of Individual Education Plans and Individual Behaviour Plans under the direction of the class teacher/SENCO.

Monitor pupil progress and record findings in accordance with the record system used within the classroom.

Participate in the evaluation of IEPs/IBPs through discussion and written feedback to teaching staff as requested.

#### *Support for the Curriculum*

Work with teaching staff to develop and implement short, medium and long term planning in all areas of the curriculum.

Show an awareness of the curriculum requirements for the age group, for example, Foundation Stage Guidance, National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy documentation.

Be familiar with the location and content of school policies and schemes of work in all areas of the curriculum.

Make materials and resources appropriate to the identified needs of individual pupils to support learning across the curriculum.

#### *Support for the School*

Foster positive relationships between home and school.

Be aware of confidential issues linked to the pupil/school relationship and keep confidences appropriately.

Liaise and consult with other members of the multidisciplinary team supporting the child when asked to do so.

Support the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs within the wider school community.

Help all pupils comply with expected standards of behaviour in and around school including assisting with the supervision of pupils during whole school events such as assemblies.

Be aware of each child's general well being and alert to possible child protection issues, discussing concerns with the class teacher.

Assist with fire drill and any other safety procedures in accordance with the policies of the school.

Attend whole school staff meetings and training days at the direction of the Headteacher.

#### *Arrangements for Staff Development*

Participate in the programme of appraisal interviews used within the school reflecting on current practice and identifying targets for future training and development.

Keep up to date with developments in the field of primary education through attendance at courses/INSET training and reading relevant magazines/Journals.

C.M.M./M.S. 2001

GRANGE FIRST

**RESPONSE FROM TEACHING ASSISTANTS' (LSAs) QUESTIONNAIRES**

Total returned 11 (3 from ALS assistant) i.e. 9 participants

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 1 Have you got a job description?  | YES: 2   | NO: 2  |
| 2 Do you find your job description useful?   | YES: 2 (ALS)   | NO: 6<br>(NNEB) NO: 1<br>(‘knows what to do’.) |
| 3 If yes, in what ways?  | ‘useful introduction to my role at beginning of my employment as ALS assistant.’ |  |
| Some LSAs commented on being deployed on jobs outside the classroom – ‘anything the headteacher requires’ and that is not always appreciated by the teachers and also makes the job description difficult to define. |  |  |
| 4 Have you ever had an opportunity to review your job description?   | YES: 0   | NO: 9  |
| 5 Do you have an opportunity to take part in the planning of lessons?  | YES: 2 (ALS)   | NO: 5<br>(NNEB) SOMETIMES: 1                   |
| 6 Do you contribute to recordkeeping?  | YES: 9   | NO: 5  |
| Are the teacher’s expectations realistic?  | YES: 9   | NO: 0<br>SOMETIMES: 0                          |

Comments

‘New teachers need to know how to use a teaching assistant effectively so children benefit.’  
‘I feel appreciated and my comments and work valued.’  
‘Teaching assistant not to be used to tidy up after children and put workbooks/pencils away for them.’

- |  |        |  |
|--|--------|--|
| 7 Do you feel your contribution in the classroom is valued?  | YES: 7 | NO: 0<br>SOMETIMES: 2                          |
| 8 Do you feel you have enough time to do all that is asked of you in a session?                                | YES: 5 | NO: 0<br>SOMETIMES: 4                          |
| 9 Do you feel you get enough training for your role?   | YES: 5 | NO: 4  |
| Comment – ‘initial training was adequate but this (i.e. training) has decreased considerably in recent times.’ |        |  |
| ‘I’m learning all the time.  |        |  |
| 10 Are you interested in further professional development?   | YES: 9 | NO: 0<br>(including City & Guilds certificate) |

OTHER COMMENTS

- Teaching assistants and pupils benefit from a reminder from the teacher when the session is to finish so that tasks can be completed successfully,
- Training to keep up to date with school practice is essential to ensure a consistent approach and to support both teachers and pupils.

## GRANT FIRST

**THE EFFECTIVE USE OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS' TIME  
TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE**

This questionnaire is designed to give you the opportunity to share with us your thoughts and feelings. It is part of our on-going work to continue to ensure a consistent, supportive and effective use of the teaching assistants' time. Please fill in a questionnaire for each teaching assistant you work with. You do not need to identify yourself or the teaching assistant.

- 1 Are you aware of the teaching assistant's job description? Yes/No
- 
- 2 • Please order the ways in which you use your teaching assistant's time  
(1 = most often, 9 = least often)
- working with a group
  - supporting SEN IEPs
  - preparing materials
  - putting up displays
  - cooking
  - hearing readers
  - organising resources
  - mending resources
  - filing
- 
- 3 Do you include your teaching assistant in planning? Yes/No/Sometimes
- 
- 4 If no, how do you communicate your plans to the teaching assistant?
- 
- 5 Does the teaching assistant contribute to record keeping?  
If yes, how?
- 
- 6 Do you feel your teaching assistant has enough time to do all that is asked of her? Yes/No/Sometimes
- 
- 7 How much time are you able to find for advice, guidance, support and feedback?
- 
- 8 Please complete the following sentence.  
I find the most effective use of the teaching assistant's time is ...

DRAFT

**MOORSIDE HIGH SCHOOL STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE**

**We would be grateful if you could answer the following questions in order to help the Learning Support Department assess how to raise its profile. This is part of a project that we are working on after starting a pilot project with Manchester University and the LEA.**

1. Do you know where the Learning Support Base is?
2. Have you ever visited the LSB?  
If you have: how often have you visited and why?
3. Why does the Learning Support Assistant spend time in the classroom and
  - (a) What benefits do you gain?
  - (b) What difficulties does this pose for you?
4. Do you see the LSA as a person who requires direction from you? If you do, what kind of tasks do you expect the LSA to carry out?
5. Do you ever give positive instructions to the LSAs about what you require them to do which could be more proactive in a partnership with you to meet the pupils' needs?

We would appreciate any suggestions or advice you could give in order to help the Learning Support Assistants raise their profile.

## MOORSIDE HIGH SCHOOL STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

We would be grateful if you could answer the following questions, in order to help the Learning Support Department assess how to raise its profile. This is part of a project that we are working on after starting a pilot project with Manchester University and the LEA.

1. Do you know where the Learning Support Base is?  
*Yes – Trevor Building*
2. Have you ever visited the LSB?  
*Yes – On average 2 x per week*  
If you have: how often have you visited and why?
  - a) *Necessary calls to see staff*
  - b) *Out of interest e.g. to see SuccessMaker*
3. Why does the Teaching Assistant spend time in the classroom and:
  - a) What benefits do you gain?  
*To help individuals. Whole class benefits*
  - b) What difficulties does this pose for you?  
*None!!*
4. Do you see the TA as a person who requires direction from you?  
If you do, what kind of tasks do you expect the TA to carry out?  
*T.A. requires ideas as to what objectives of lesson are. To help individuals, class, mark work as appropriate.*
5. Do you ever give positive instructions to the TAs about what you require them to do, which could be more proactive in a partnership with you, to meet the pupils' needs?  
*Seldom. The TAs listen to introduction and appear to know what to do. I find we are generally a proactive team.*

We would appreciate any suggestions or advice you could give in order to help the TAs raise their profile.

*I am happy with TA profile in my classes. I find them to be most helpful, positive and a big plus to my teaching.*

Since first drafting this questionnaire, the DfSE has decided that the title of Teaching Assistant should be used. The term has a more positive emphasis on the 'teaching' role of the assistant in the classroom. It has already been used in the publication of the 'Good Practice Guide': 'Working With Teaching Assistants'. As a department we feel that it is important to use this new title in order to remain consistent with other Local Education Authorities.

## MOORSIDE HIGH SCHOOL STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

We would be grateful if you could answer the following questions, in order to help the Learning Support Department assess how to raise its profile. This is part of a project that we are working on after starting a pilot project with Manchester University and the LEA.

1. Do you know where the Learning Support Base is?  
*Yes*
  
2. Have you ever visited the LSB?  
*Yes very occasionally*  
If you have: how often have you visited and why?
  - 1) *Training course with DJG*
  - 2) *To deliver work for children in LSB*
  - 3) *Buffet lunch*
  - 4) *To ask colleagues questions about pupils from time to time*
  
3. Why does the Teaching Assistant spend time in the classroom and:  
*To help specific children with difficulties/sometimes to help with a more difficult group.*
  - a). What benefits do you gain?
    - 1) *An extra pair of eyes*
    - 2) *Less demands on me from SEN child/children; more time to work with the group.*
  - b). What difficulties does this pose for you?  
*None really*
  
4. Do you see the TA as a person who requires direction from you?  
If you do, what kind of tasks do you expect the TA to carry out?  
*Yes – mainly out of courtesy! I would expect them to ensure their charge(s) is/are on task.*
  
5. Do you ever give positive instructions to the 'TAs about what you require them to do, which could be more proactive in a partnership with you, to meet the pupils' needs?  
*No. But I can see that I ought to more. (It has happened perhaps – informally – when we've chatted about various groups after lessons.) Before lessons, time seems less available.*

We would appreciate any suggestions or advice you could give in order to help the TAs raise their profile.

*How about attending faculty meetings – a forum to exchange ideas/get to know staff?*

## MOORSIDE HIGH SCHOOL STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

We would be grateful if you could answer the following questions, in order to help the Learning Support Department assess how to raise its profile. This is part of a project that we are working on after starting a pilot project with Manchester University and the LEA.

1. Do you know where the Learning Support Base is?

*Yes*

2. Have you ever visited the LSB?

If you have: how often have you visited and why?

*Daily*

3. Why does the Teaching Assistant spend time in the classroom and:

a). What benefits do you gain?

*Support for pupils and teacher.*

b). What difficulties does this pose for you?

*None apart from remembering to tell them plans.*

4. Do you see the TA as a person who requires direction from you?

If you do, what kind of tasks do you expect the TA to carry out?

*Sometimes – it depends on the nature of the work. Most of them use their initiative and think ahead and get on.*

5. Do you ever give positive instructions to the TAs about what you require them to do, which could be more proactive in a partnership with you, to meet the pupils' needs?

*Not enough I feel, again more forward planning is needed on the part of the teacher.*

We would appreciate any suggestions or advice you could give in order to help the TAs raise their profile.

*We need to devise some method whereby staff regularly include LSAs in their planning and inform them in advance of lesson plans – NOT in detail, just outline, so that LSAs know what to expect. This would enable them to be more effective as they often have good ideas about how to help individual pupils. The problem is – finding a way to do this which would not make staff feel it increases the amount of paperwork etc.*

Since first drafting these questionnaires. The DfES has decided that the title of Teaching Assistant should be used. The term has a more positive emphasis on the 'teaching' role of the assistant in the classroom. It has already been used in the publication of the 'Good Practice Guide': 'Working With Teaching Assistants'. As a department we feel that it is important to use this new title in order to remain consistent with other Local Education Authorities.

WHITMORE HIGH

Sneha and myself went to the Management Board meeting at school and outlined to senior staff, the Head and Governors the aims and objectives of the project. We were well received and asked to attend another Management Board meeting in June to update the board on our progress. We did this on 6 June. It was noticeable that our Head (who is very supportive of all his staff) listened intently to what we had to say and then asked if this would mean that every LSA would need an hour a week, ideally with each subject teacher!! As we have 17 LSAs working in our school, I could see there might be a huge problem. I very quickly mentioned that as a progression from 'in-class' support it might be an idea to have 'specialist' LSAs in departments. An idea that Sneha and I had discussed with Karen. Naturally we suggested Geography and Maths for starters. This would build upon our policy of working with one particular Department each year to develop a specific area of the curriculum.

In conclusion, I would just like to add that as a result of our presentation to Management Board, many staff members have been approaching Sneha and myself and asking questions and showing an interest. A copy of the minutes from Management Board are circulated to the teaching staff following each meeting.

## HARROW VI TEAM

## LSA's PLANNING IN HIGH SCHOOL

Range of LSA's Work	Positive Practices	Difficulties occurring
<i>VI Teacher Liaison Meetings</i>	Encouragement for LSAs to work towards independence of pupils. Practical advice on management skills, resources (LP) Self appraisal, new skills and management Interaction with parents	<b>LSAs may not be able to do this easily and need management skills</b>  <b>Time limit of meeting</b>  <b>Limited intervention required</b>
<i>HofD/Senco/Teacher Meetings</i>	Good planning strategies Obtaining Syllabuses, Schemes of Work Liaising with subject teacher on lesson plans/adaptations Effective planning produces good relationship with teacher to confide on lesson evaluation	<b>Time limits</b> <b>Pressure on teachers prevents this</b> <b>Time limits</b>  <b>Constructive feedback difficult due to lack of time</b>
<i>Curriculum</i>	Planning well in advance for syllabus/resources Allowances in timetable for preparation, liaison and record-keeping Good relationships with teacher for approaching them for lesson plans/adaptations – confidence for teacher/pupil in lesson	<b>Teachers not prepared or lack of time, pupil frustrated</b> <b>SENCO needs to organise this</b>
<i>Classroom Participation</i>	Lesson Plan/Resources ready for lesson in LP for total inclusion during lesson LSAs aware of all requirements of pupil and pupil given information before lesson Responsibility to pupil to access curriculum  Classroom management Record keeping	<b>Planned resources not available – LSA left on own initiative with pupil</b> <b>Teachers not always sure how to best utilise the LSA effectively</b>  <b>Teacher expects LSA to produce differentiated sheets with no planning</b> <b>LSA's expertise in specific subjects more effective in different depts. Sharing pupil responsibility with other LSAs</b> <b>Overhead projector work etc</b> <b>Time limited</b>

Cont...

Range of LSA's Work	Positive Practices	Difficulties occurring
<i>Extra-curriculum activities and out of school visits</i>	Planning / Awareness of needs of pupil  Activities with pupils and teachers Liaison with parents and other professional agencies Mobility	<b>Teachers are often unsure and need information and advice which can be given by LSA via VI Teacher or vice-versa</b> <b>Remuneration or time in lieu</b> <b>Teachers aware of salary difference</b> <b>LSA not involved</b> <b>LSA involved with Mobility Officer training</b>
<i>Long-term Planning</i>	LSA's involvement in planning with Department Heads on Examinations etc	<b>LSAs not always given direct information and too many people involved</b>
<i>Meetings/Insets</i>	LSA's involvement in inter-school meetings and Inset Days crucial to planning and encouraged to attend within specific Departments LSA sharing expertise for resources / adaptations	<b>LSAs not always given out of school hours remuneration</b> <b>Some meetings not relevant to LSA work</b> <b>Lunchtime break often used up</b> <b>Time limited</b>

See *Teaching Assistants*, page 61

## HARROW VI TEAM

### PLANNING CHART

#### Start of school year

Service Manager meets with Class Teacher, Learning Assistant, Support Teacher and any other interested parties to ensure that individual roles are agreed and understood by all.

#### Start of each term

Teacher supplies copy of half-term/terms planning for all subjects.

Learning Asst. able to start gathering relevant resources from central resource bank, ie. previous adapted materials, Braille books, tactile globes etc.

Learning Asst. and Support Teacher meet to discuss and plan desirable outcomes and any foreseeable problems.

#### Every week

Teacher supplies relevant worksheets.

Learning Assistant and Support Teacher meet to discuss appropriate adaptations, assess previous week's work, ensure that stated needs are being met.

<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> hour TIMETABLED liaison time between class teacher, Learning Assistant and Support Teacher to plan in depth lessons for the week ahead. Assess progress made. Address any problems occurring.

#### Daily

Daily record kept of work covered, achievements, problems arising etc. Records available for any interested party to see.

## HARROW VI TEAM

**Process of modifying GCSE History Coursework**

**(1)  
Receive information about the coursework task from teacher**

Information not received in time to prepare, so pupil did not have access to Braille copy until after the lesson

**(2)  
Type up task information and translate it into Braille**

**(3)  
Visit school library and choose books with relevant information**

Waited while pupil gave instructions for library research

**(4)  
Read through relevant chapters and record information onto tape**

**(5)  
Collect video from teacher**

Unable to catch up with teacher for two days

**(6)  
watch video and make notes**

Delay while waiting for video and TV to be available, so took it home

**(7)  
Type up notes and translate into Braille**

See *Teaching Assistants*, page 61

## HARROW VI TEAM

(1)

**Receive three mock modular exam papers from teacher for enlarging**

Tight deadline to work to, so work has to be prioritised

(2)

**Try out a straight enlargement using photocopier**

Photocopy gives poor reproduction, with unclear diagrams

(3)

**Discuss results with S.E. and L.F.**

Joint decision that the papers will have to be retyped to give a satisfactory enlarged copy

(4)

**Hand to L.F. for retyping**

Delay while teacher decides if one of the three papers will need to be changed for another paper

(5)

**Given go-ahead by teacher. Enlarge diagrams on photocopier**

Some diagrams still unsatisfactory so redraw several

(6)

**Assemble paper and deliver to teacher in time for exam**

MOORSIDE HIGH

#### **A4 ENCOURAGEMENT POSTERS**

As mentioned in the file contents page, part of the improvement of the appearance of the base would include A4 posters. The subject of these posters is not incidental. Obviously it is about support, but emphasising the fact that there is no shame in asking for support. Some of the pupils who visit the Learning Support Base are sometimes viewed by others (or by themselves) as being 'dim' or 'thick'. Others think that 'naughty' pupils come to the LSB. I might add that the teachers are not excluded from this thought.

Often pupils are sent to the LSB if they are behaving badly and are disrupting the lesson. We are not there for that purpose. Obviously we do support lots of pupils with behaviour problems, but we support them primarily in their work as well as trying to encourage good behaviour. We are not childminders.

Unfortunately the fact that we have a new Behaviour Unit has increased the practice of sending children with poor behaviour to the LSB. There need to be clear guidelines issued stating what the Behaviour Unit is for and what the Learning Support Base is for.

To encourage the idea that the LSB and the LSAs are there to help all pupils with their work, the following posters were printed. They emphasise that everyone needs support at some time and that support can come in many forms. We are just another body of people giving pupils support when it is needed, like football coaches or dance instructors.

#### **WHERE THE POSTERS ARE TO BE USED:**

The posters are to be put on the notice board outside the Learning Support Base and also displayed in classrooms around the school. It is essential to promote the idea that there is no shame in asking for help and that the help is there. The children only have to ask.

Master copies of the posters need to be word processed on white paper, so that they can be photocopied successfully onto coloured paper. The coloured posters are far more eye-catching.

DRAFT

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS AT MOORSIDE HIGH SCHOOL FROM THE  
LEARNING SUPPORT DEPARTMENT**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Learning Support Department have been asked to take part in a project on the role of the Learning Support Assistant. We therefore need your help in answering these few questions.

1. Are there times when there are other adults in your classroom as well as your normal class teacher. What do they do? Why do they do it?
2. Has one of these adults ever worked with you?
3. What kind of help do they give to a) the teacher b) pupils?
4. Do you know where these adults are based in the school?
5. Have you ever asked one of these adults for any help with your work?
6. Who would you expect these adults to work with?

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire.

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS AT MOORSIDE HIGH SCHOOL FROM THE LEARNING SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

### INTRODUCTION

The Learning Support Department has been asked to take part in a project on the role of the Teaching Assistant. We therefore need your help in answering these few questions.

1. Are there times when there are other adults in your classroom as well as your normal class teacher? What do they do? Why do they do it?

*the other teachers normally help members of the class who are struggling with work.*

2. Has one of these adults ever worked with you?

*Yes I find it very helpful*

3. What kind of help do they give to:

*They help us with the work and the questions*

- a) the teacher?

*the support teacher would help the teacher by quieting the class*

- b) pupils?

*they help any pupils out*

4. Do you know where these adults are based in the school?

*at the learning support base*

5. Have you ever asked one of these adults for any help with your work?

*Yes when I am struggling with my work I will ask*

6. With whom would you expect these adults to work?

*People who receive help from the support staff*

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire.

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS AT MOORSIDE HIGH SCHOOL FROM THE LEARNING SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

### INTRODUCTION

The Learning Support Department has been asked to take part in a project on the role of the Teaching Assistant. We therefore need your help in answering these few questions.

1. Are there times when there are other adults in your classroom as well as your normal class teacher? What do they do? Why do they do it?

*They walk around looking and helping pupils with work, they try to learn the way you learn and teach you*

2. Has one of these adults ever worked with you?

*No.*

3. What kind of help do they give to:

a) the teacher?

*They look around to help pupils and so if they are stuck they can get to you and help instead of waiting for the teacher*

b) pupils?

*they save them waiting for the teacher.*

4. Do you know where these adults are based in the school?

*No.*

5. Have you ever asked one of these adults for any help with your work?

*Yes, they were quite helpful to me and saved me waiting for the teacher*

6. With whom would you expect these adults to work?

*Children with learning and general difficulties but also the rest of the class*

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire.

**WHITMORE HIGH**

**Report from Seri March – Head of Geography**

1.03.01

Learning Development – assistant

What has helped this project develop is the time allowed to meet formally. This has been of great value as items are discussed in relation to the schemes and also how certain students can have access to it.

Anne Perring is attached to Geography and this consistency has benefited the students as well as the staff as they get to know her and not just the SEN students use her/benefit from the support.

What is needed is time where resources can be developed using the teacher to aid the classroom learning assistant. This would ensure that the geographical aspect is there as well as the resource, hence making/enabling the students to access/achieve the objectives. Overall the work so far has, on the whole, been very positive for both the students and the Department.

Seri March  
Head of Geography

After my first experience of the Year 8 History class, Karen and I met up to discuss the class. We used the Special Educational Needs folder to discuss the specific needs of the children. We also analysed past target levels of each student. Using this information certain 'target students' were identified, as we felt they did not meet their potential.

Karen gave me a copy of the scheme of work for the term and kept me informed informally on the work to be carried out. This was very useful as I was not thrown into the classroom without knowing what the lesson was about. This increased my confidence and enabled me to be used to my potential.

**Outcomes**

Each outcome had a knock-on effect on the other.

- Improved communication between the teacher and myself.
- Forward planning enabled me to give maximum support.
- The achievement of the short-term aims of the 'target students' that Karen and I discussed gave me a sense of job satisfaction and made my work more fulfilling.
- Working together with the teacher made me feel respected, worthwhile and feelings of alienation were removed.
- Good communication led to my being clear about my role and responsibilities in the classroom.
- Constructive criticism from the teacher was valued greatly. Praise from the teacher boosted my confidence. The same was true for praise to the teacher from myself. By this outcome I feel that there may be a need for reviews and appraisals for Learning Assistants.
- By the teacher and myself supporting each other, I feel that the pupils as well as ourselves benefited tremendously e.g. most target students' levels increased.

See *Teaching Assistants*, page 63

WHITMORE HIGH

**INVITED TO ATTEND GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT MEETING**

**HELD ON 11.12.00**

Present: Seri March, Chris Green, Jeremy Fincher, Anne Perring

General discussion took place regarding ICT/Geography working together to produce a Newspaper Report (to be done in rough first) and then on computer in Publisher.

Seri informed the meeting that she had block booked the library resource centre and computer rooms and she confirmed with the members of staff the dates she had booked and rooms to be used to ensure the staff would make full use of the facility she had organised.

Curriculum issues mentioned were deadlines for work due in either before the Winter break or first week of Spring Term.

Seri advised staff to start the new topic for years 8 and 9 on the 1st day of the Spring Term, as in fact she would be.

*Note:* [www.yorkshirenet.co.uk/ydales/index.html](http://www.yorkshirenet.co.uk/ydales/index.html)

Year 11 Core and periphery – paper 2 cases not in so much detail.

Year 10 Unit 3 – place – Leicester – Urban land use.

Year 9 Ecosystems – Biomes and Rainforests (mentioned school visit to Museum – linking with above – to take place end January, beginning February) details to be discussed nearer time.

Up to half-term – assessment – sugar paper/oral/pairs. Year 8 Rivers and Water.

General discussion about various students and also mocks – predicted grades.

Meeting closed.

FROM Visibility (Spring 2000)

## **PLANNING – its importance in the work of learning support assistants**

As a result of the enormous growth in the numbers of learning support assistants (LSAs) being employed in schools and other educational settings across the country the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) commissioned a piece of research to look at the management, role and training of LSAs. This was carried out by a group of researchers at the Centre for Educational Needs at the University of Manchester. The research, published in 1999, identified a number of factors which were considered to be important in ensuring the best possible practice by this group of staff. The researchers needed to test these indicators of good practice to confirm that they had identified the right ones and, at this point, three LEAs began the follow up project. This article is about the contribution of a visual impairment team from one of the authorities, Harrow, which took part.

The group of staff who took part consisted of five centrally employed LSAs with the team leader from the Visual Impairment Service acting as mentor. All the LSAs had considerable experience working alongside class teachers in order to support the learning of pupils accessing the curriculum through the medium of Braille. As Harrow LEA has a policy of inclusion for pupils with visual impairment in their local schools the LSAs were from a variety of settings across the authority, both primary and secondary. The main focus of their

role was to ensure that the pupils received appropriate curriculum materials at the same time as their peers. This enabled the pupils to be in many lessons without additional adult support, thereby having the same access to the class or subject teacher and their peers. The LSAs chose to focus on the indicators relating to joint working with teachers, particularly focusing on the planning process. These were:

- LSAs work co-operatively with teachers to support the learning and participation of pupils
- LSAs work with teachers to prepare lesson plans and materials
- Teachers management strategies provide clear guidance as to how LSAs should work in their classrooms
- Teachers and LSAs learn together to improve the quality of their work.

The LSAs began by considering the importance of planning in order for there to be positive outcomes for the pupils in their learning. All agreed that they would not be fully effective in meeting pupils' needs if planning time was not built into their timetables. When working with a new teacher unfamiliar with meeting the needs of a blind pupil, it was agreed that more time was needed and it was the investment given at this point which set the scene for future success. This time enabled all involved to be clear on what needed to be done and by whom. The LSAs drew up the following list about the outcomes of good planning.

See *Teaching Assistants*, page 68

## Good planning leads to

- an understanding that the teacher is the manager of the whole class, and takes full responsibility for all the pupils' learning
- high and realistic expectations on the part of: the pupil, peers, teacher(s), parent(s)
- an understanding that the tasks that other pupils carry out can be done by that pupil too, once they are made accessible
- appropriate resources being available to support the learning of all pupils with the brailist receiving theirs at the same time as their peers
- the pupil and teacher developing a range of strategies for use in a variety of situations; the pupil being able to take responsibility for their own learning in lessons even when the unexpected happens
- the pupil being on an equal footing with their peers
- the pupil having the same opportunities as their peers for social interaction, without the presence of an extra adult
- direct support only being given when really needed; the need for this having been identified and planned for appropriately
- having opportunities for pre-teaching of new concepts (when necessary).

The LSAs identified two methods of planning that were being used very successfully in the schools and that led to the outcomes identified above.

The first shows the approach used in secondary schools where the notion of having planning time with all the subject teachers is unrealistic. It begins with the LSA obtaining as many schemes of work as possible. These already exist so this does not mean any extra work on the part of the subject teachers.

### Approach to planning and adaptation in a secondary school

LSA obtains **schemes of work** from subject teachers



These will include:

- Topics to be covered
- Details of each lesson
- Lesson aims (general)
- Expected outcomes
- Page numbers (of books to be used)
- Copies of worksheets (numbered)
- Homework



LSA goes through them/looks at materials



Will go back to **subject teacher** to get more specific information/clarification on content or teaching approach to be used (if necessary)



Will go to **specialist teacher** (visual impairment) to sort out issues relating to braille/tactile production/approaches to adaptation



Produces materials



Passes the materials through system (existing or set up to suit individual requirements) to subject teachers



Student receives materials from **subject teacher** at the same time as peers

The emphasis throughout is on enabling the student to work independently and have access to his/her peers without the presence of additional adult support (in the majority of lessons).

The second approach has been used very successfully in several primary schools. In this model planning time is set aside – this does not need to be for long periods – half an hour spent with no interruptions can be very productive. Schools sometimes use some of the LSAs' paid time to plan over part of lunchtime if this is felt to be appropriate. Other times that have been used for planning are during whole school activities, such as song practice or assemblies during which the teacher and LSA are given time. As the teacher and LSA become familiar with this way of working, the frequency of the meetings often reduces.

**Further reading:**

DfEE research RR161 'The management, role and training of Learning Support Assistants' by Dr P. Farrell, Dr M. Balshaw and Dr S. Polat.

• **Elizabeth Clery**  
**RNIB Senior Education Officer (London)**  
**on secondment from Harrow LEA**

Any queries or comments to:  
eclery@rnib.org.uk or tel. 020 7391 2276

**Approach to planning and adaptation in a primary school**

Identify a time/frequency for planning



Identify who should be there



Class teacher **brings written plans** to meeting, which will include:



- Lesson aims
- Content of lessons
- Learning objectives
- Pages of books to be used
- Worksheets to be used



Teacher/LSA/Specialist Teacher (VI) go through plans in order to identify:



- Teaching approaches to be used
- Need for any pre-teaching
- Teaching points of more complex materials
- Need for any in-class support
- Opportunities for small group work



Specialist teacher (VI) and LSA meet to analyse the best way to adapt materials depending on information received at previous meeting with the class teacher.



LSA adapts materials ► print copy given to teacher



Materials given to pupil by teacher at the same time as peers.



Teacher takes responsibility for the learning of the whole class.

HARROW VI TEAM

**Modification of resources for a visually impaired pupil in high school**

In order to prepare resources/ materials for a visually impaired pupil, a scheme of the next term's work is collected from every department, by the teaching assistant, towards the end of each term. This allows sufficient preparation and liaison time. This page from a Scheme of Work shows the content of geography lessons, for approximately one week, for a year eight class. Below is a list of tasks to be completed by the teaching assistant in order to prepare the work for the pupil.

1. Collect scheme of work from teacher and arrange a time to meet briefly for further consultation. Hopefully this can be same day or very soon after.

- Read through information for first three weeks' lessons, with particular regard to Skills, Teaching Strategies, Resources and Homeworks.
- Highlight any areas of concern. In the example these would be:

SKILLS

- Interpreting photos (written explanation will need to accompany)
- Interpreting graphs (enlarged or tactile graphs to be made)
- Interpreting maps (enlarged or tactile maps to be made)

TEACHING STRATEGIES/ ASSESSMENT

- Working in pairs (see teacher)
- Class feedback/spider diagram (see teacher)
- Watching an earthquake video (see teacher)

RESOURCES

- Enlarge (tape or Braille) all pages of the book *Geography Direct* that are mentioned in the Teaching Strategy/ Assessment column.
- A written description to be included for all photographs.
- Enlarged or tactile graphs to be made.
- A written description may be needed to accompany video (teacher)
- Enlargements/ tactile maps will be needed.

HOMEWORK:

- Instead of drawing and annotating diagrams for homework, Braille-using pupils will give written explanations. (see teacher)

2. Short meeting with teacher to discuss areas of concern. In this example these would be:

- Working in pairs, find suitable partner.
- Spider diagram (this would be a list for a Braille user. As this is boardwork could the teacher speak out what is being written down please?)
- Is video well described? Can it be borrowed to make video notes for pupil (will this be useful for others as well, more copies can be made). Can it be borrowed to be shown to pupil at a separate time, in school?
- Homework for Braille-using pupil will need to be a written description rather than a diagram.

3. Work can now be prepared in a suitable format for the pupil.

Kathryn

**WEEKLY PLAN CLASS WEEK: 9 12/3/01**

**HARROW VI TEAM**

	<i>Learning Intentions</i>	<i>Main Activities</i>	<i>Plenary</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>
RE	See R.E planning sheet				→
Sci	To understand that circuit diagrams are special ways of showing a circuit.	1) Discuss p100 + 101, identify components and their symbols. Write explanation, draw and label symbols. Draw circuit and its diagram. 2) Complete PCM5 matching circuit diagrams with definition.	Quiz children on symbols. Talk through answers to PCM 5	Letts textbook pp 100-101. PCM 5 (scheme)	
ICT	Continuation of Graphical Modelling Task.				→
Hist/Geog	1) To make authentic Mexican food – tortillas 2) To create an Aztec book To investigate the life-styles of traditional Inuit people	1) Follow recipe instructions from 'Jump' to make tortillas (half class at a time) 2) Use Aztec number symbols to make a number book. Make object symbols of own. Read and discuss text pages. Write information in words + colour + label map showing the areas in which these people live and hunt.	Look at Aztec books and watch a tortilla being cooked. Discuss modern day Eskimos	Tortilla ingredients, mobile hob. Sugar paper + texts (Ginn pp 34 + 35) 'People + Places: Canada'	
Art/DT	To understand the procedure for making a biscuit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demo to class actually making the biscuit following set recipe</li> <li>Children order the muddled up instructions for the making of biscuit</li> </ul>	Go through work completed. Are the instructions in the right order	Recipe w' sheet. Ingredients. Utensils.	
PE	To improve dribbling skills using feet	Year 5 Unit 3: Soccer (Lesson 4) Warm up Sections A + B Cool down	Discuss key points 1) Keeping control when dribbling 2) Using both feet not just one	Football each Cones?	
Music	See J. Pott				→
PSHE					

<i>Priorities for week</i>	<i>Homework</i>	<i>Comments</i>	
	Mon Mental Arith BK3p	Wed	Date:
	Tue Writing an explanation	Thu	
		Fri Spellings	

**LITERACY**      Key Learning Intention: *To plan and write an explanation in the form of a detective's report.*      HARROW VI TEAM  
 Main Activities – inc differentiation (Text, word & sentence level)

	<i>Learning Intentions</i>	<i>Whole Class</i>	<i>Indiv/Group</i>	<i>Plenary</i>	<i>Resources</i>	+	-	<i>Assessment adjustment</i>
Mon	To interpret visual clues	Look at photograph, set scene & explain task of being detective. Choose item, discuss reason for being in car in pairs. Write different explanations for for one item down on board in note form. Repeat as necessary.	In pairs the children will discuss and write down explanations for items (5) in car.	Read explanations, develop further through discussion & questioning.	Unit 6 Writer's World			
Tues	Notemaking	Return to photograph, look at other details. Use R.S.1 to note suggestions & clues to back up. Draw attention to use of abbreviations, show examples.	Use R.S.2 to identify & highlight key words in passage, and use them to write brief notes.	Review & discuss notemaking activity.	Resource sheets 1 & 2			
Wed	To use connectives Re-ordering sentences	Carry out living sentence activity with R.S.3 & 4 Discuss meaning of connectives & purpose. Use handbook p41 to discuss which would be spoken and which written.	Use notes in notebook pp 38 & 39 to examine which have been turned into complete sentences.	Go through connectives used in report.	Handbook pp 38 & 39			
Thu	To plan explanation text in note form	Re-read detective report & identify tense changes. Do some examples of changing sentences into past, present & future. Talk through how to complete explanation plan and model, completing first section in note form.	Use R.S.5 to plan their own explanation for the photograph in note form.	Demonstrate to how to turn one or two notes into explanatory text.	R.S.5 Photograph			
Fri	To write explanation using detailed sentences	Remind of previous session and demonstrate further turning notes into full sentences. Ask questions to result in more detail. Talk about overloaded sentences.	Construct an explanation of the abandoned car using plan from previous lesson.	Listen to explanations – are they plausible or outrageous?	Planning sheet			

*Extended writing, drama, handwriting, spelling...*

**NUMERACY Key Learning Intention:** • *rotating shapes through angles*  
 • *interpret data on a line graph* HARROW VI TEAM

	<i>Learning Intentions</i>	<i>Mental Acts</i>	<i>Whole Class</i>	<i>Indiv/Group</i>	<i>Plenary</i>	<i>Resources</i>			<i>Assessment adjustment</i>
Mon	• To interpret data on a line graph	Mark H/W from weekend	p.60 (graph) shape txt bk on OHP Discuss what it shows and how to interpret info. Go through Q's also	Children complete p.61 Shape txt book on similar task	Discuss any difficulties?	OHP Shape txt book	+	-	
Tues	• To interpret data on a line graph which has two sets of information	Using cards order fraction decimals	Test 26 Num Tests 10-11 on OHP discuss interpreting chart that has two sets of data.	Children plot graphs in own books using data on w sheet then answer set Q's	Discuss how we use diff scales in diff graphs	OHP Test 26 Test Bk 10-11 w sheet			
Wed	• To be able to rotate shapes through turns of 180°, 90° 270° and 360°	Converting measures g-kg, ml-l, m-km.	Discuss how 90°, 180°, 270°, 360° turns relate to compass points. Demonstrate rotating of shape through these.	Using shapes on p.41 shape txt bk rotate each of them through 90°/180°/270°/360°	Discuss and draw answers on whiteboard	Shape txt bk			
Thu		Test 26 Num Test 9-10 on Data (line graph)	p. 40 on OHP discuss and match up pair of shapes rotated through 180° Recap over 90°/180°/270°/360° turns	Using w sheet with shapes with centre of rotation copy and draw a rotation of that shape.	Discuss any common problems.	Shape txt bk			
Fri	To rotate shapes accurately using clockwise/ anticlockwise terminology	Times Table Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recap over clockwise/ anticlockwise</li> <li>Demonstrate rotating of shape e.g.: 270° anticlockwise etc.</li> </ul>	Use shapes on p.42 of shape txt bk to practice drawing diff turns	Discuss any problems over all work rotating shape	Shape txt bk			

## HARROW VI TEAM

### PLANNING

The LSAs began by considering the planning process and the different aspects that have to be considered. All agreed that they would not be fully effective in meeting pupils' needs if planning time was not built into their timetables. When working with a new teacher unfamiliar with meeting the needs of a blind pupil, it was agreed that more time is needed and it is the investment given at this point which sets the scene for future success. This time enables all involved to be clear on who is going to do what in ensuring curriculum access for the child.

*Good planning leads to:*

- High/realistic expectations by:
  - pupil
  - peers
  - teacher(s)
  - parent(s)
- An understanding that the teacher will manage the whole class, and take full responsibility for that pupil and his/her work.
- An understanding that the tasks that other pupils carry out can be done by that pupil.
- That resources will be there to support the learning and that the pupil will receive them at the same time as others.
- That the pupil will be able to take responsibility for his/her own learning in lessons even when the unexpected happens.
- That the pupil and teacher will develop a range of strategies for use in a variety of situations.
- That the pupil will be on an equal footing with his/her peers.
- That the pupil will have the same opportunities as his/her peers for social interaction.
- That direct support will only be given when really needed.
- That there will be opportunities for pre-teaching (when necessary).

The LSAs identified two methods of planning that are currently being used very successfully in schools and that lead to the outcomes identified above.

The first shows the approach used in high school where the notion of having planning time with all the subject teachers is unrealistic. It begins with the LSA obtaining as many schemes of work as possible. These already exist so this does not mean any extra work on the part of the subject teachers.

REFLECTIONS OF HARROW VI TEAM TA

My role involves planning with the class teacher and support teacher to enable me to adapt and modify any class work. I also transcribe print worksheets into Braille and produce tactile pictures. My main aim is to advance the pupil's independence wherever possible, which can only be done by ensuring that work is preprepared. Such preparation also enables me to give any preteaching, where required, something that is essential for independent working for the pupil. The ratio of in-class support that I provide compared to being out of the classroom preparing work is approximately 20:80.

As a service we chose to focus on planning as an example of good practice. Before I came to work with this service, my experience of successful planning had not been a good one. Although in some cases I would meet with the class teacher on a weekly basis, detailed information regarding resources for lessons had often not been prepared, or, in cases where it was, no time was given to me to enable work to be modified or adapted. My other experiences were that there was no planning meeting at all. When I came to work with the Service for the Visually Impaired I found that things were very different. Teachers actually expected to plan in the necessary detail, therefore, I felt confident that the process that we are involved in would be a successful model that could be used by others.

We began by producing our own individual flow charts of the process we go through from the initial stages of planning to the end product. This enabled me to take time out to focus on and assess an integral part of my job. It was also useful consolidation, particularly as we found that we were all basically operating the same way

I have felt very positive about the outcomes of our research. It has confirmed for me that we do achieve good practice and increased my confidence in feeling justified in pursuing that aim for although I already knew planning was vital, I still felt apologetic, sometimes, for having to insist on this requirement from the class teacher.

Janice

## WHITMORE HIGH

Working with Seri March in Geography as my 'first target' teacher has been very encouraging. At our introductory meeting she put the 'ball in my court' and asked what I would like to discuss. I handed her my copy of the 'purple folder' and we looked together at all the students in our Year 10 geography group. Focusing on the IEP targets. By the end of the meeting Seri commented that it had been useful for her also as it made her reflect on the issue of IEPs in addition to helping me with ideas and ways to achieve the student's targets in lessons. It is much nicer receiving information and worksheets ahead of lessons, rather than 'go in cold'. It also raises the student's confidence in you as you can help them immediately.

When I accompanied Seri and another teacher on a field trip recently, I really felt part of 'the team' as I knew exactly what we were going to set out to do and also I was given specific tasks on the field. This involved working with a group of four students including one with English as their second language. There was going to be an SEN student as well but he did not come on the day.

So far, the use of the indicator A1 'LSAs work co-operatively with teachers to support the learning and participation of pupils' has been carried out at Whitmore by Sneha and myself with excellent results.

Anne

## WHITMORE HIGH

### **Supporting Teachers in the classroom – progress report**

I recently had occasion to support the same supply teacher in two consecutive lessons of Geography.

In both lessons the students were given a work sheet to read and a set of questions to answer. The sheet was the start of a new topic, therefore the students were unfamiliar with the key words and ideas.

I do not think the supply teacher had Geography experience, or did not appear to.

Consequently, the students referred all their queries and questions to me throughout both lessons.

I feel that this particular area is perhaps a negative one, regarding being attached to one department. It must be very demoralising for a supply teacher to encounter this sort of reaction in a classroom full of students.

Anne

WHITMORE HIGH

**Governor's evaluation**

- Head has already given time for liaising, is now aware of the need for this to be timetabled in. Is looking into this for Sept 2000. Will affect the S.D.P.!!
- Improvement in students.
- Better relationships with teaching staff.
- Sharing of lesson plans. Better prepared to help students.
- Re-awakening of awareness of needs for student, staff and TAs (e.g. seating plans, resources, work sheets)
- Standards in dealing with behaviour

Angie

GRANGE FIRST

## WORKING WITH TEACHING ASSISTANTS

### TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ON MONDAY, 22 JANUARY 2001

#### 1. How can Teaching Assistants be included in planning?

- Verbal feedback from activities to inform further planning.
- Teacher to identify activities for TA on weekly plans through name, initials or highlighting.
- Difficult to include TAs in planning sessions with teachers as time is limited and many TAs are SMSAs.

#### 2. How can plans be communicated to Teaching Assistants?

- Weekly planning to be given to TA with learning objectives identified and activities highlighted/coded/noted on plans.
- Verbal discussion/feedback (to take account of any changes/amendments needed)
- TA to be involved in whole class session to reinforce learning objective and model teaching.

#### 3. What do Teaching Assistants need to know about the children with special needs they are supporting?

- A copy of children's IEPs and an awareness of strategies/activities to support specific targets.
- Access to individual subject target cards, i.e. literacy and numeracy.
- Know about other professionals involved with specific children, e.g. speech therapist, E.P., occupational therapist, Access & Development Team.
- Access to teacher's SEN file
- Knowledge of school's policies and practice on SEN and Behaviour Management
- Liaison with parents
- Importance of confidentiality
- How to encourage children to work independently as much as possible.

#### 4. How could Teaching Assistants contribute to recordkeeping?

- Use a class list and comment/use agreed shorthand against learning objective/intention.
- Linkbooks
- Own record book for individual children
- Class reading records
- Incident book
- Write on children's work
- Oral feedback
- Availability at parents' Open Evenings.

#### 5. In what ways can the teacher develop the Teaching Assistants' skills?

- Model teaching strategies
- Share ideas through discussion
- Through the IEP
- Feedback (written and oral)

#### 6. In what ways can the school develop the Teaching Assistants' skills?

- Regular TA meetings with SENCO
- INSET on specific issues, e.g. behaviour mgt, phonics, numeracy strategies, ICT
- Training through out-of-school courses, e.g. STA, CLANSA, City and Guilds, Borough, DfEE.

#### 7. What training should school provide to support teachers with Teaching Assistants?

- Whole school INSET e.g. learning through play, role of TA in w/class sessions in literacy. ICT
- Clarification of expectations – awareness of job description
- Develop Policy and Guidelines
- Feedback and strategies to maximise effectiveness of partnership, given limited contact time.

UPTON PRIORY

**EXTRACT OF NOTES FROM STAFF MEETINGS**

[p. 2 contd.]

for the rental – any comments?

Teachers to liaise with each other about SEN needs

Angela Pettick may be available.

Harvest–Thursday Y6 only to bring in flowers and fruit, the rest of the school to bring in donations after or on the day for Uganda.

Detention – This not to be used for children who have not finished their work, they should be in supervised classes.

Children wearing yellow bands are the only children that should be in at break times.

Classroom Assistants are to have in school training for literacy, and this will lead to going on literacy courses with the teachers as money is coming from the (government?)

AOB will come after the dates in future at staff meetings to include us. (e.g. Rugby shirts)

UPTON PRIORY

**From Teaching Assistants (minutes 2) 3.01.01**

**New Playground Duty Rota**

Playground rota – assistants to be responsible for disabled pupils.

Chantal is blind and needs one assistant to herself.

<i>Monday</i>	Gwenyth Kath S	Chantal Sue
<i>Tuesday</i>	Alison Kath E	Sharron Jackie
<i>Wednesday</i>	Karen Elaine	
<i>Thursday</i>	Sharron Gwenyth	Kath S
<i>Friday</i>	Karen Kath E	Jackie

It was decided that Wednesdays will still be the best time to meet during assembly time. Any notices and information will be written up in this book for everyone to catch up on. The book will be kept in the physio room.

Staff meeting rota also done for next half-term

**Teaching Assistants (minutes 3)**

Half-term see C.A.'s staff meeting book.

Kath S has had a reply from Nicholas Winterton MP re single status – encouraging. Please ask Kath if you want to read it.

If anyone has spare time please continue helping to sort/organise the physio room.

K.W.

See *Teaching Assistants*, page 71

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS OF PUPILS AT MOORSIDE HIGH

Moorside High School has a team of Teaching Assistants working alongside pupils in school. At present the department is taking part in a project in conjunction with the LEA and would appreciate your time in answering a few questions.

1. Are you aware that Moorside High School has Teaching Assistants working with pupils in the classroom?

YES

NO

2. Did you know that the Teaching Assistants offer the following support in school?

In class support where appropriate in Year 7 classes	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
In class support where appropriate in Year 8 classes	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
In class support where appropriate in Year 9 classes	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
In class support where appropriate in Year 10 classes	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
In class support where appropriate in Year 11 classes	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Withdrawal programmes for identified pupils in Year 7	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input checked="" type="radio"/> NO
'SuccessMaker' – An integrated learning system which caters for all pupils regardless of age or ability	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Reading Friends' Support	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Spelling programme during registration	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Help for Year 10 and 11 with coursework and NRAs	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Help with exam preparation	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Help with homework when needed at break and lunchtime	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input checked="" type="radio"/> NO
English as a second language support	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Extra support during exams for specific pupils	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
A supervised 'Base' for recreational times	<input checked="" type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Support during the three days induction	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input checked="" type="radio"/> NO
Support in primary schools for identified pupils during the summer term	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO

3. Would you like to see any other support offered for your child from the department?

*There used to be help with homework club at 3 pm with a member of staff. Could this be reinstated?*

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. Please return to the Learning Support Department as soon as possible.

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS OF PUPILS AT MOORSIDE HIGH

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In class support where appropriate in Year 10 classes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	NO
In class support where appropriate in Year 11 classes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	NO
Withdrawal programmes for identified pupils in Year 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	NO
'SuccessMaker' – An integrated learning system which caters for all pupils regardless of age or ability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	NO
Reading Friends' Support	YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Spelling programme during registration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	NO
Help for Year 10 and 11 with coursework and NRAs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	NO
Help with exam preparation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	NO
Help with homework when needed at break and lunchtime	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	NO
English as a second language support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	NO
Extra support during exams for specific pupils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	NO
A supervised 'Base' for recreational times	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	NO
Support during the three days induction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	NO
Support in primary schools for identified pupils during the summer term	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	NO

3. Would you like to see any other support offered for your child from the department?

*An agenda for any shortcomings to be revised or acted on during holidays or weekends i.e. extra homework or intensive subject work to enable them to either catch up or to achieve full potential*

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. Please return to the Learning Support Department as soon as possible.

VAUGHAN

S.E.N. SUPPORT  
TEAM MEETING

NEXT MEETING WED. 7<sup>th</sup> 1-00 pm  
2-00 pm

AGENDA

IDEAS PLEASE.

1. Feedback from Games - photocopy material for resolvers Kalpana & others.
2. Manchester Project -
3. Additional Lit. Strategy.
4. **Restraint**
5. Kerry Hardstaff (INSET) <sup>spelling recognisers, letter practical</sup>
6. What do the Governors say about "policy" or action to take within school re: <sup>cases</sup> restraint allegations
7. Do the SMTAs have any talk regarding children <sup>cases</sup> & allergies etc. ?? brackets in confidential
8. Health events - <sup>cases</sup>

VAUGHAN

**SEN SUPPORT TEAM MEETING**  
**Wednesday 7th February 1.00–2.00pm**

Present: Jackie Millington, Sue Nilsson, Kate Penman, Lyn McQuater, Carol Glass, Amelia Blake, Kalpana Sangani, Androulla Bray, Bharti Amin, Kate Purkiss-Webb, Swarti Sikdar, Jackie Glass, Hansa Patel and Surinder Minhas.

Apologies: Linda Henry, Kathy Walker, Bharti Mistry, Joyce Fuller; Frances Davis.

**Action**

**1. Last Meeting**

- No minutes as the group shared games they used with the children. There were lots of games and many ideas for new games. There are new games kept in the Literacy cupboard that would be suitable to use with SEN groups as well as to support higher ability pupils.
- Sue N. to speak to Gail C. about using/borrowing the games. Sue N.
- Useful games to be copied and laminated e.g. Hansa has a game that would be useful for both Numeracy and Literacy activities. Game now available and laminated. See Hansa.
- Jackie G. had a useful 'Cow' game/activity How to use the 'cow cards' and ideas are on a photocopiable sheet. Jackie to photocopy. Sheet distributed by Sue N. w/b 29.1.01

**2. Agenda**

- 1 Games. Surinder and Kalpana told everyone about the games/activities they used and were popular. Lots of ideas and all useful. 'Swap' cards useful with PAT programme. Sue N. to order. See Surinder and Kalpana if you would like to know more. Sue N. to order swap cards.
- 2 Kalpana's Activity/Worksheets. The group discussed the collation of worksheets and said what a good idea the books were. This led into a discussion about differentiating worksheets for the SEN children. Sometimes TAs can differentiate 'on the hoof' but it would be much better if they had the worksheets along with the planning so they could differentiate in advance. Sue N. suggested that they ask for worksheets in advance especially if the class teachers photocopy the work Thursday or Friday of the week before. Sue N. also mentioned that when we discuss Special Needs at a whole school INSET differentiation would be one of the areas discussed. Sue N. also said that even if differentiated work supplied by the class teacher is too difficult they can adapt it so the child/children will understand – S.N. was sure that class teachers would appreciate this.

**3. Manchester Project**

Maggie Balshaw will be visiting the school on the afternoon of 7th March:

- i. To meet with Sue, Surinder and Jackie M. Sue N. to arrange a time.
- ii. To meet with the Team of TAs.

During her visit she would like to know how things are moving forward in the school. Sue N., Surinder and Jackie M. to meet prior to the visit. Sue, Surinder and Jackie to discuss.

Induction/Mentoring was discussed – a variety of issues arose. We're putting things into operation but still have not got it right. It was suggested that we actually write down what will happen for a new LSA to the school (what should happen). This can be done by all. We need a time to meet and discuss ideas for next meeting. All – with ideas for next meeting.

See *Teaching Assistants*, page 82

VAUGHAN Contd.

#### 4. Additional Literacy Strategy

Training for this will take place after half-term on Friday 2nd March 2001 (am). Helen Moore was very keen and motivated when she attended the course. The materials for the additional Literacy Strategy are for Year 3 to 6 and they will help boost those children who attained a Level 2C at Key Stage 1 SATs. The use of the materials will complement the work already being done by using the PAT Programme.

Those being trained by Helen will initially work with Year 3 and Year 4 children. They are Androulla, Swarti, Kate Penman and Kate Purkiss-Webb.

#### 5. Kerry Hardstaff

Kerry is willing to give an hour's INSET to the group for one of the sessions. She would like to know what TAs would like. The group said some ideas and activities for Spelling – using a practical approach e.g. adults do what the children would do. Question and Answers as part of the session too.

Sue N. to liaise with Kerry re a time and date.

#### 6. Peanut Allergies

It was explained to the group that the situation regarding nut allergies was discussed at an SMT meeting recently. It was decided that nuts would not be banned in school, instead:

- a) The child/children with the allergy need to have a good understanding of their problem
- b) The children at school need to be educated regarding the problem e.g. what they must/must not do. What happens if nuts are eaten by a child with an allergy
- c) All children in the school need to know that they must not share food with each other
- d) SMSAs to be taken through what their role will be in the dining hall regarding sharing food and nut allergies

S.C. at SMSA meetings.

#### 7. Health Events

Carol Glass brought to everyone's attention the 'Health Events' chart. All thought it would be a good idea to take part in such events as Asthma week etc. Carol to organise, and seek the help she needs from staff.

Carol Glass

#### 8. Restraint

Restraint was briefly mentioned at the end of the meeting. We went over the restraining position recommended. Sue N. mentioned there was a Restraint Policy that everyone should be aware of – in the School's Policy Folder. Sue N. to distribute to those that do not already have a policy.

Sue N. to distribute policy.

#### NEXT MEETING: Friday 2nd March 2.30 to 3.25 pm

- Brain Gym 27th February 2001 at Teacher's Centre for those who have given their name (Check with Sue).

All check.

#### TA's Comments

The school has regular meetings for all the LSAs, which encourages a sharing of ideas and provides a safe place to discuss difficulties. We have recently looked at record keeping and are hoping to provide a framework of consistency between us all.

In summary the Manchester Project appears to have encouraged us to be more focused to re-evaluate our present role, to define this clearly, to state our hopes and to look forward to the future!

GRANGE

Teaching Assistant Meeting 20/3/01 10.10 a.m.-10.30 a.m.

**Agenda**

1. Information update – school/PTA events/issues
2. Update on Manchester Project
3. Update on S.E.N. reviews and procedures
4. T.A. training
5. A.O.B. (if time)
6. Next meeting 3/4/01

20.3.01.

① Pta events - information update:  
Parents evening:  
Sharon  
Tracy  
Linda  
Sue J  
Varsha

Budget:- 35 pupils down -  
see Staff meeting minute book.

All TAs work ok for next year.

Still problems with speech therapist.

ICT Workshop on alt. Weds.  
12.30 - 1.00 as from 21/3/01  
Margaret available.

Spring act. Thurs. 29.3.01  
Focus on reading for year one

GRANGE Contd.

## ② Manchester Project (Maggie)

Book to go ahead - We will be contributing (Sharon; Tracy & Linda, Paula)

## ③ SEN update - targets

Guidelines for TAS and SEN for next year - TAS should receive updated IEP by end of term.

All TAS should now be receiving plans.

## ④ training:

Varsha  
Ann Smily  
Sue J

All TAS have time to apply for courses.

Some TAS <sup>role</sup> miss out on 1-1 reading; feel job has changed a little.

We are working to recommendations, and reading and guided reading may not take place in literacy hours, but at other times throughout the day.

- Year one - Support for reading ELS

involves - 1 - TA

1 - YR1

1 - R

training 3/4 Separated days  
begin 21/5/01. Not confirmed yet.

UPTON PRIORY

**Assistants' support for one another**

I work full time as a teaching assistant with a Y6 class supporting two children who are wheelchair users. There are nine teaching assistants in total in our school and four of us are involved working with Y6. We all work together as a team, supporting and helping each other with lifting and handling the children on a daily basis. We know each other's jobs and are able to cover absence and anticipate when people need an extra pair of hands with little or no advanced notice. I feel we are so successful at this team working throughout the school, across all year groups, that it happens as a matter of course each day and often without even having to ask each other.

In particular I have had help from other assistants toileting children, lifting them into standing frames and onto bikes. Also on one occasion I was ill and another assistant stepped in to cover my job and went on a residential trip at very short notice.

I have helped by swapping around and taking other children on residential visits when other assistants couldn't go due to family commitments. Also I have done physiotherapy sessions for another child while his assistant was unable to due to illness.

At the school where I work, helping each other out is a natural occurrence between LSAs. It is more often than not a spontaneous action, with people offering assistance without the need to be asked. We are a strong team, knowing we can turn to each other for help or even just to discuss any concerns we may have.

There are numerous occasions when another assistant has helped me out. One of these is when I could no longer carry out physiotherapy with my statemented child due to the development of arthritis. Immediately one of the other assistants took over this duty, even though it was obviously adding to her own work-load.

One of the times I have supported a colleague is when she was unable to accompany her child on a school trip and I stood in for her.


When asked to make a note of a couple of instances when one has offered to help and also received it I had to really think carefully. Not because it is such a rarity but because it is something that occurs naturally throughout each day, many times, without consciously thinking about it.

Kath Everett

UPTON PRIORY  
ASSTS' SUPPORT...Contd/

Kath Sayers.

I was helped when I had  
2 children coming out of P.E.  
who both needed assistance <sup>at the same time</sup>.  
I called for help and another  
classroom assistant arrived to help  
with dressing one child.

I help my opposite number  
(we are both learning braille)  
so we try to give each other a  
bit of a test! This only takes a  
few seconds as we do it in passing  
using a paint palette !

---

Jackie Cogan Temporary Special Needs Classroom Assistant: 10 hours per week with a Y5 Visually Impaired boy and 8 hours per week with a Y3 Girl with Learning Difficulties.

In February of this year I was taken into hospital unexpectedly and another Classroom Assistant had to take my place at very short notice to supervise a games lesson. During the same month I assisted with toileting a child with muscular dystrophy on several occasions when another Classroom Assistant was on a course.

This type of co-operation – in one form or another and for whatever reason – is happening quite often on a day to day basis and, to my knowledge, there is never any question of querying the requests as it just seems to be naturally understood that it is always in the best interest of the child/children, and all other parties concerned. It certainly seems to produce a good atmosphere among the Assistants and the different children get to know you.

UPTON PRIORY

**Teaching Assistants' Minutes 1**

**Meeting of TAs 13/12/00**

- SINGLE STATUS** – After attending the briefing meeting at Ryles Park school 21/11/00 Kath S. and Kath E. put together a letter of complaint to C.C.C. Everyone was given a copy to send to Personnel. Mr Rowley was given a copy, and he was writing to personnel in support of us. A copy was also to be sent to the school governors with an accompanying letter, to make them aware of our concerns and asking if there is anything they can do. Perhaps a copy could also be sent to our MP.
- MANAGEMENT** – We would like someone from the senior management team to attend our Wednesday meetings at least once a month so that they are aware of what we are discussing and to help iron out any problems that come up.
- HOURS** – We tried to make a timetable of when TAs are in school as we have had a change round of hours and who is where. Anne Parr joined the meeting at this point and we discussed our concerns over hours given and how they will work out for children and staff. As extra hours have been applied for to cover Jessica and it is not clear yet what hours Emily has been allocated, we will talk again in the New Year Chantal/Mark also needs looking at.
- UNION** – Kath E. is the only member of UNISON. PAT now has membership available to NNEBs and especially those working in education. Kath S. will find out more to see if they have any advice on Single Status.

See *Teaching Assistants*, page 83

MOORSIDE HIGH

STRUCTURE OF TEAM MEETINGS

Every Monday, period 5, Week 1, the whole of the team including the authority workers, come together to discuss any issues, concerns, etc.

The Learning Support Co-ordinator is also present at the meetings to share and disseminate any information from management/academic/pastoral meetings.

Minutes are taken, action taken if needed and filed for information.

Meetings used to take place every Friday lunchtime, this was quite informal, voluntary and prone to interruptions from pupils. It was decided that this meeting needed to be formalised and time-tabled to make it official.

RYLES PARK HIGH				
Outcome of LSA Staff development			Resulting school action	
1. Do you have a job description?	<i>Yes</i> 2	<i>No</i> 5	<i>Don't know</i> 1	Job description needed
2. Is it specific to you or the same as all the LSAs in the school?	<i>Yes</i> 2	<i>No</i> 6		To include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generic</li> <li>• Departmental</li> <li>• Personal</li> </ul>
3. Are you linked to a subject department?	See list			
4. Are you ever the person 'in charge' of the class or group?	<i>Yes</i> 6	<i>No</i> 2		Policy needed See SMT
5. Does your job description match the tasks/ activities that you do?	<i>Yes</i> 1	<i>No</i> 1		LSAs to lead job description action
6. What staff development (training) have you had over the past 3 years?	Separate list included			
7. Could you describe the job you do at Ryles Park (A4 maximum!)	See separate photocopies			Core list
8. How would you like to see your career progressing over the next 3 years?	Suggest training, qualifications, career structure, reward/ recognition			Raise with SMT appraisal

RYLES PARK HIGH

**TA MEETING  
Monday 18th December  
Seminar Room**

**AGENDA**

- 1. Feedback from Research Meeting  
With particular reference to job descriptions** CA/SH
- 2. Progress with individual job descriptions.**
- 3. Hours allocation.**
- 4. Role in the classroom.**

Copy to TGO, RB, CP, TAs

*Minutes of the TA Meeting held on Monday 22 January 2001*

- Job descriptions all typed up and awaiting a meeting with TGO and RB to clarify.
- Information disseminated from various courses attended by TAs:
  - TA Induction Course – LS
  - Behaviour management – module 2 – SH
- Carolyn and Sam gave feedback on the presentation about the Good Practice Guide (Congratulations from RB and thanks to Brenda Wych).
- TA hours were clarified ready to alter job descriptions as of 29 January 2001.
- Single Status – SH trying to arrange a meeting with UNISON to try and answer how Single Status will affect Teaching Assistants.
- RB mentioned about CLASS – another organisation for TAs which is free to join. See VB for photocopy of information.

Date and time of next TA meeting – Monday 26 February – Lunch time.

## RYLES PARK

### Teaching Assistant Induction Day Programme – Day 2 Literacy/Numeracy

#### Literacy

The afternoon session was led by Ruth Robson. Most of it was taken up with strategies for written work. Ruth spoke about The National Literacy Strategy which was introduced in 1998 to provide a practical, manageable scheme of work for covering the requirements of the National Curriculum in England. The major elements are:

- A framework of teaching objectives for each term of each year of the primary school.
- A daily Literacy Hour, which is a structured system for teaching these objectives. The teaching objectives for each term set out.
- The range of types of text children should be covering in reading and writing.
- Specific objectives for teaching at three levels:
  - Word, covering phonics, spelling and vocabulary
  - Sentence, covering grammar and punctuation
  - Text, covering comprehension and composition

Although, at the moment, this is only available for primary schools, there is a pilot scheme in secondary schools around the country and the strategy at Key Stage 3 will begin in September.

The National Literacy Strategy is succeeding in raising the level of literacy in schools because it ensures continuity from class to class right through from Reception. Part of what it teaches is grammatical language – sentence structure, tense, vocabulary, appropriate language for purpose and cohesion.

Having taken us through this, Ruth went on to talk about phonics and how important this is. It is: the skills of **Segmentation** and blending + **Knowledge** of the alphabetic code.

We played a phoneme game where we had to count the number of phonemes in each word. The game was as follows:

Strift – 6 phonemes

Plank – 4 phonemes

Chest – 4 phonemes      ch is a digraph

Play – 3 phonemes

Edge – 2 phonemes

Catch – 3 phonemes      tch is a trigraph

Great – 4 phonemes

Caught – 3 phonemes      aught is a quadgraph

Cont...

See *Teaching Assistants*, page 85

Following on from this, Ruth displayed on the OHP the name – JOHN H FARNISCAN – and asked us how we would pronounce it. We all agreed on the same thing, which was because we all had the phonic skills of segmentation and knowledge of the alphabetic code. Within the sequence of letters we could all find letters and sound we knew and this, apparently, is called 'chunking'. To demonstrate this further, we were given the word 'grandfather' and asked to spot as many words as possible within that word, keeping to the letter order. By the end of the time allowed, we had found: ran, grand, fat, her, rand, an, the, and, gran, father, a, he, at, and Ra.

Ruth then, briefly, went over the rule for when to double a consonant. A word doubles its consonant if it has a short vowel sound and ends in one consonant like tap, hop, flap. If the vowel sound is long like leap, feel, or if it ends in more than one consonant already like pump, or stretch, then the word does not double the consonant.

Finally, we looked at mnemonics which could be used to help children remember words they find difficult.

Belligerent	egocentric	woeful
Elephants	xenophobic	handmaidens
Can	hottentots	irrigate
Always	invariably	sudden
Use	blow	pyrotechnics
Sellotaped	individual	elegantly
Envelopes	trumpets	responsibly
	in	endearingly
	obliging	damply
	nuances	

Most spelling in schools is taught in lists which the children learn and then have to spell under test conditions. Ruth pointed out how much more useful it would be if words were learned in context. To demonstrate this she gave us the following list of words which show how confusion is easily created by the vagaries of our spelling system.

Gave	have
Mint	pint
Sweat	great
Bead	bread
Cow	grow

Please see the attached handout which Ruth gave us outlining the role of the TA in supporting the Literacy hour.

VAUGHAN

**INDUCTION OF NEW STAFF**

**Names:** Staff list and classes at September 2000. Members of staff all call each other by first names – but not in front of the children.

**Communication Channels:** The main notice board for all staff is situated on the right hand wall of the staff room.

1. Every Friday a weekly diary is displayed on the large white board outlining the main events, meetings, known staff absences etc. for the following week.
2. A daily bulletin is displayed on the white notice board detailing (when applicable) staff illnesses, cover, unforeseen events, requests etc.
3. List of known supply teachers for the week also goes up every Friday.
4. The SMT meets every Monday morning (8.30 – 8.50 a.m.) to discuss each week's activities. This team also meets on Friday mornings from 8.30 to 9.30 a.m. Should individual staff wish to raise particular issues they can approach member of SMT for discussion at appropriate time.
5. Staff meetings are held every Monday (3.45 to 4.45 p.m.) to discuss curriculum and matters of organisation and the day-to-day running of the school.

**'Vaughan Rituals'**

**Coffee/Tea** Coffee/tea making facilities are available in the staffroom. A member of staff organises and buys the coffee, tea, milk and sugar and displays a list on the notice board detailing various costs. Individuals then pay appropriate monies at the beginning of each term. A microwave is also available for staff use. A fridge is available for storing lunch.

**Lockers** Staff lockers are located in the staffroom. These are lockable and individually named. New staff should see the school secretary about the availability of these.

**Pigeon Holes** Just inside the entrance to the staffroom are individually named pigeon holes for letters, notes etc.

**Telephone** Staff may make telephone calls from the school office (there is also a phone in the Welfare room).

**Vaughan Nursery First and Middle School**

**LSA INDUCTION AND MENTORING**

Mentor assigned who has a similar job within the school

Prior to the new person starting the Mentor prepares a package containing the following:

- Job Description
- Timetable
- Staff Handbook
- Copy of Welfare Handbook (if appropriate)
- Class list

First day at school

- Mentor to show the new LSA around the school with particular attention to the department and classes where they will be working and communal areas e.g. Staff room, resource rooms, etc.
- Discuss timetable with mentor/SENCO
- Discuss and go through Staff Handbook. (NB. role of LSA within the school)
- Mentor takes the new LSA to class and introduces them to the class teacher/s and the child/ren.

First Staff Meeting

- LSA is introduced to all staff at the meeting and welcomed.

Class teachers and Year Groups

- Class teachers to ensure that LSAs receive Planning for the curriculum and Guidance to work in the individual classrooms and year groups.
- Class teachers to ensure that LSAs receive the relevant information about SEN children (SENCO support for LSA too).

First Half Term

New LSA and Mentor to meet weekly to talk through and discuss:

- How things are going
- Information about next SEN team meeting
- Where children's records are kept (office)
- To understand the Behaviour Policy and Restraints Procedure
- Job descriptions
- Responsibilities
- Procedures
- Resources
- Difficulties
- Training
- Planning

STATEMENTED CHILDREN

For LSAs working with statemented children the following should be included:

- Meeting with Parents, SENCO, Job share (if appropriate)
- Go through IEP and child's file

Second Half Term

- Mentor, SENCO, LSA to discuss any matters arising from the first half term.
- Decide upon training needs.
- Set up a Professional Development Programme.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

All LSAs, Welfare and Resource Staff will have Professional Development interviews during May and June each year.

TRAINING NEEDS

- Specific training for the whole team will be identified in the School Improvement Plan. Training for specialist groups within the Team will also be identified e.g. LSAs working with EAL pupils.
- Training needs can also be identified by the whole Team and addressed at the Fortnightly team meetings.

February 2001

**VAUGHAN NURSERY, FIRST AND MIDDLE SCHOOL  
MANCHESTER PROJECT**

**Mentoring**

Whilst working on these ideas another role we felt was necessary to be included in our new job description was that of Mentoring – of new nonteaching staff, this opened up another issue of Induction. As over the past couple of years many new LSAs have joined Vaughan School but none felt they had anyone in particular to turn to or to be shown properly around the school and all felt that having a mentor would have been very useful.

We produced a draft copy, edited it and came up with what we felt was an acceptable job description for Learning Support Assistant with Welfare Duties

Surinder

**Induction**

The group started by brainstorming thoughts and ideas as to what should be included. The group found it difficult to keep to the matter in hand as they wanted to share their own experiences as new staff. However, eventually we were able to draw up a list of ideas to be considered by the Senior Management Team, e.g.:

1. A mentor to show new staff around the school, support and answer any questions in the first weeks/ months.
2. Staff who job share to meet and discuss a common ground to ensure consistency for the pupil.
3. If working with Special Needs pupils for the first time, some training and information would need to be given, e.g. Autism.
4. A meeting with the class teacher to discuss the pupil's needs and how best the class teacher and support staff can work together.

We plan to come together to discuss and share our ideas with our SENCO. I feel sure the management team will look carefully at our suggestions and an induction package for support staff will be next on the agenda.

Jackie

VAUGHAN

**Brain Gym Seminar**

- |  |                          |  |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| 1. <b>Introduction</b>                             | – Frances D.             | (What is Brain Gym?)   |
| 2. <b>PACE</b><br>(To include)                     | – Intro.<br>– Demo.<br>– | Amelia<br>Surhinder and Lyn<br>Water, Brain Buttons,<br>Cross Crawl & Hook-ups |
| 3. <b>Midline Movements</b><br>(To include)        | – Intro.<br>Demo.        | Amelia/Frances<br>Joyce<br>Lazy Eight, Double<br>Doodle & Elephant             |
| 4. <b>Strengthening Activities</b><br>(To include) | – Intro.<br>Demo.        | Amelia/Frances<br>Jackie M., Bharti and<br>Androulla<br>Tracking and Owl       |
| 5. <b>Energy Activities</b><br>(To include)        | – Intro.<br>– Demo.      | Kalpana<br>Kalpana and Hansa<br>Various buttons etc.                           |
| 6. <b>Discussion</b>                               | –                        | in groups with at least<br>one person who has used<br>Brain Gym before         |
| 7. <b>Questions/Comments</b>                       |                          |  |
| 8. <b>Repeat PACE if there is time.</b>            |                          |  |

**Note:**

We will have the pictures of PACE on the overhead and will use a white board for the midline movements.

Each member of staff will be given a copy of our Brain Gym handouts. The introduction will explain that our course centred on the exercises not the background. If we have any questions that are difficult for us to answer about the background, I suggest we are honest and say we don't really know but that the details are in the handout.

Everybody will be advised to bring water and a pen/pencil and paper.

Thanks,  
Frances.

(Things to check – White board and markers with at least two colours. Overhead Projector. Room Layout).

cc. All LSAs involved in Brain Gym.  
Sue Nilsson.

<b>Springwood School Staff – Information Proforma</b>	
Name	d.o.b.
Current school:	Current age range:
Subject responsibility (if relevant):	Other responsibilities:
Specific area(s) of expertise:	Area(s) of interest:
Other age groups worked with:	Other school experience:
Recent professional development (past 3 years for courses; all qualifications gained):	
Areas/skills you would like to develop:	
Interests out of school:	

Parkes Field School: 1 Before project work

Summer Term 1999

**Professional Interview: Non-teaching Assistants**

Name: \*\*\*\*\*

1. *How do you feel this year has gone?*  
I have enjoyed it: it has been a good year. Generally things have been a lot better. They have been a challenging group because they are very mixed, but we have coped with it.
2. *What have you personally done (or as a class team) which you feel has gone well?*  
We have all worked together: have been consistent in our practice and behaved the same with all the children, so we have been able to share in the success of their progress. We are all very different people, each with something particular to offer the team. The children have really come on in all areas – even J! They are moving forward.
3. *Is there anything further / different you would like to do in the future?*  
I would like to be able to master the use of the communication aids better than I can now. Leonie has taken to the ORAC and I could do with ORAC training now. It would be useful to have sessions with the speech therapist, also involving T and D.
4. *How could this be facilitated?*  
We could buy in cover to release people to work together, thus providing extra time; we also need the extra training.
5. *Is there anything you would prefer **not** to do?*  
No.
6. *Is there anything you would like to change about your role, the management of it etc?*  
No: it has been good this year and I have enjoyed working with B. Having a smaller class will be better because the one drawback this year has been having 11 pupils.
7. *What training needs do you, or the NTAs as a whole, have which you feel are not currently being met?*  
Training in the use of communication aids in particular. It's not really very long since I completed my training so that I don't yet feel the need for looking at child development areas. I would like to do the DPQS if there is a possibility of funding in the future.
8. *How would you like training to be provided?*  
Both in and out of school.
9. *What would you like to see us, as a school, achieving next year?*  
The same as every year, really: pulling together and making it work for the children. Getting through Ofsted!

Parkes Field School: 2 After project work

Summer Term 2000

**Professional Interview \*\*\*\*\* 29.6.00**

1. *How do you feel our first year at Northumberland Street has gone?*  
Well: I have enjoyed being able to develop the sensory room and the sensory curriculum since moving buildings.
2. *Is there anything in particular you have enjoyed doing, or that you feel has benefited the school?*  
I have enjoyed setting up the sensory room and curriculum, and helping to plan and organise the Summer Fair. Preparing for Ofsted has taken up a lot of our time since we came here. I would like to use the knowledge and skills I have gained from my RNIB training to train others, in e.g. class groups, to use the observational skills involved. Graham Barlow (v.i. support service) has offered to help.
3. *Do you feel the LSA research project has benefited the teaching assistants? In what ways?*  
It's positive and moves us forward. A proper career structure will be better for us – it's nice to know that someone actually wants to do something about the present situation for teaching assistants. The project has brought us together as a team and given the opportunity to share with colleagues. You can feel undervalued if your skills are not recognised and rewarded.
4. *Are you happy with your current role and placement? Do you want to change anything at this stage?*  
I would like to move classes if I could, but am prepared to stay where I am for the last year. I would want to broaden my horizons with the new school – move on from being intervenor for one. I would not want to transfer to secondary with the pupil I am currently responsible for. We need to know where we are going. It is possible to get stale always doing the same things. Our children need fresh approaches all the time to sustain their interest and make progress. It would be good if for example there were a quick conversion route from NNEB to teacher training without loss of pay.
5. *Professional development needs: in which areas of training would you like to see more opportunities?*  
Sensory curriculum: more training with Flo Longhorn. Working with \*\*\*\*\* and the training in VI has made me realise she needs a total sensory curriculum – touch, taste, hearing – to meet her needs and make progress.
6. *The new school: how do you rate the training so far, and what further things could we be doing at this stage to prepare for amalgamation?*  
Training is O.K. – very positive and professional, informal enough to be enjoyable but also informative. We need more social joint events; if the Summer Fair goes well, we could arrange something at Christmas for all the staff and children.
7. *Are there any other ways in which you would like to develop or change your current role: anything further you would like to do?*  
I would like to move on from working with one child at the end of next year. I would prefer to be seen as part of a team meeting children's needs than attached to just one. There is still a feeling here that \*\*\*\*\* is my responsibility and no one else's – partly because I've had the VI training. Other staff need more training for working with children with complex needs so they can share responsibility.
8. *Is there anything you want to ask me at this stage?*  
Will there be a career structure for teaching assistants in the new school?  
Ans: don't know at this stage, but we should encourage it.

See *Teaching Assistants*, page 89

Parkes Field School

Summer Term 2000

**Professional Interview \*\*\*\*\* 3.7.00**

1. *How do you feel our first year at Northumberland Street has gone?*

Really well – it's been a very positive year. There have been loads of bonuses – even the packing up and starting here made everyone work together, and it's made a difference throughout the year. We've all come together and made this building our school – because we all started here together.

2. *Is there anything in particular you have enjoyed doing, or that you feel has benefited the school?*

I have mastered Boardmaker! I have done a lot more on the PC – thanks to support from more experienced colleagues. I have enjoyed taking on and developing the photographic record-keeping. I have enjoyed the added responsibility arising out of the LSA project. I have also enjoyed working with Class 2 again and seeing the progress they have made.

3. *Do you feel the LSA research project has benefited the teaching assistants? In what ways?*

Yes – we were excited by it and have passed this enthusiasm on to the others. It's given an incentive to staff to prove what they can do, to demonstrate what they are capable of. Everyone is involved.

4. *Are you happy with your current role and placement? Do you want to change anything at this stage?*

Yes – very. I don't want to change anything at this stage.

5. *Professional development needs: in which areas of training would you like to see more opportunities?*

More ICT, through working with classroom colleagues and in other ways. I would like to find out more about the legal side of child care – 'looked after' children – if there is anything available. This could be the subject of a training day.

6. *The new school: how do you rate the training so far, and what further things could we be doing at this stage to prepare for amalgamation?*

I have enjoyed the ones so far, but we have not had the sort of links I expected, and we haven't really talked to people we don't know. I don't know how we can do it when everyone is tied up with their own jobs. Perhaps as the training goes on we can arrange something. It's going to be different for everyone anyway. Everyone will be new to the school, and roles will be different.

7. *Are there any other ways in which you would like to develop or change your current role, anything further you would like to do?*

I am pleased with this year's achievements. They have boosted my confidence both in class and in the school as a whole. I'm very much a classroom-based person and my confidence in other situations has now been built up. I would like to carry on with the LSA project and take on a bit more in terms of helping others – and, of course, to carry on supporting \*\* and the team.

8. *Is there anything you want to ask me at this stage?*

Will there be some form of interview for the new school? (No idea at this stage)

Parkes Field School

Summer Term

**Professional Interview \*\*\*\*\* 3.7.00**

1. *How do you feel our first year at Northumberland Street has gone?*

Brilliant! We have all settled in well and the children have made a lot of progress.

2. *Is there anything in particular you have enjoyed doing, or that you feel has benefited the school?*

The AAC group, of course, and my appointment as nursery nurse. It is quite different from being a care assistant. I have more time to do things and as a result I can give more to the children. Writing in take-home books and sharing information with parents has worked in extending work at school to home.

3. *Do you feel the LSA research project has benefited the teaching assistants? In what ways?*

Probably in national terms: we can benefit ourselves here through school structures. It will be good for increasing the profile of teaching assistants in other schools. The government wanted a positive report and that's what they'll get, so it will help others to progress. It's helped us to better ourselves in a small way, but it can't make much of a difference to the job itself without a national career structure.

4. *Are you happy with your current role and placement? Do you want to change anything at this stage?*

I don't really want to change much at the moment. I need time to get into my new position and I'm happy with my current team. I would like more time for AAC preparation in school. I work very well with \* \* \* \* \*.

5. *Professional development needs: in which areas of training would you like to see more opportunities?*

AAC courses: I would be interested in us doing something here. I'm not doing a further education course myself this year. Is it worth trying Liberator or could the speech therapist and I do it?

6. *The new school: how do you rate the training so far, and what further things could we be doing at this stage to prepare for amalgamation?*

Very good. I've enjoyed it so far and feel we need more of it. We will be working with a lot more PMLD children: however much training you have, a good rapport is the main thing. We'll do our real training on the job. Visiting other schools and their staff visiting ours would help.

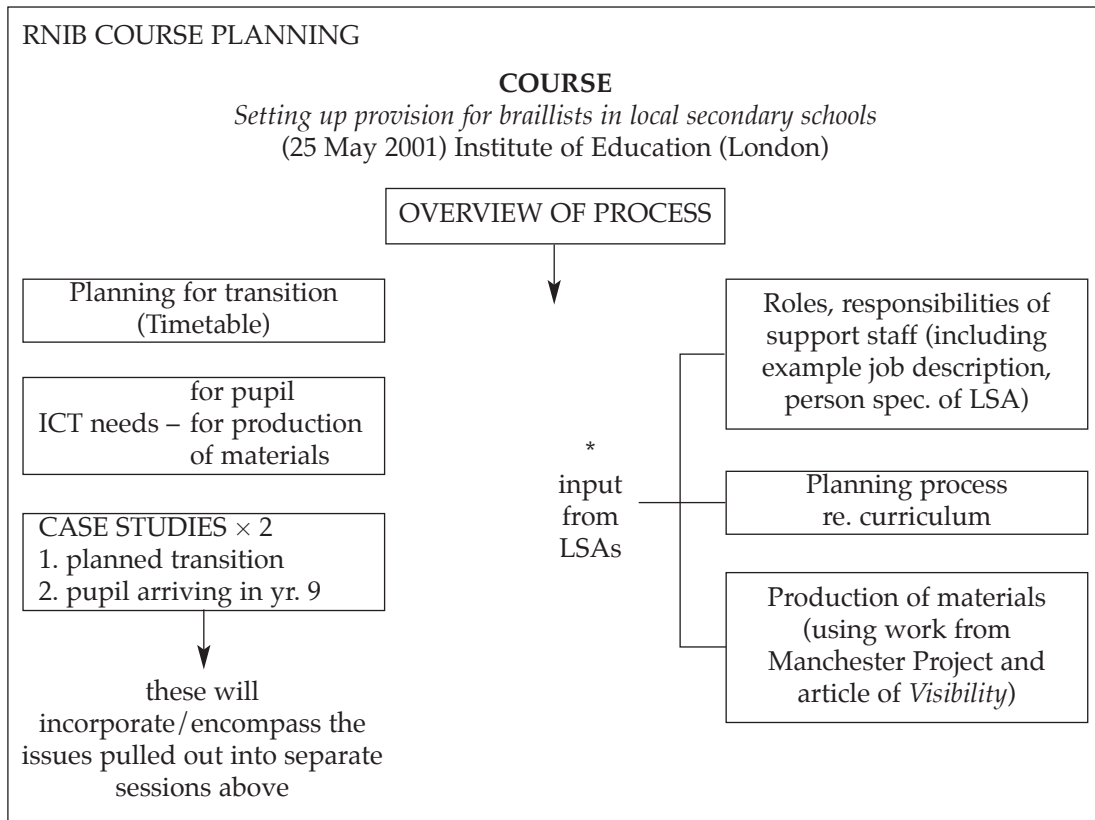
7. *Are there any other ways in which you would like to develop or change your current role: anything further you would like to do?*

I would like to have more time for preparation and programming the talkers, and more input into children with talkers in other classes. I could do with working with J's Key Worker if he is going to use the ORAC talker, especially as he gets better at using it.

8. *Is there anything you want to ask me at this stage?*

No, not really. Are you satisfied with my work? (Yes!) It would be useful to have another AAC group for J, J, A and L so that the slower ones can work at a level appropriate for them: for future development.

See *Teaching Assistants*, page 89



## GRANGE

### GRANGE FIRST SCHOOL STAFF INSET 26/2/01

The role of the Teaching Assistant in the shared section of the Literacy Hour with particular reference to recommendations from the DfEE. Agenda and materials from the DfEE have already been provided.

Staff were asked to consider how the Teaching Assistant could contribute to the following areas:

#### **Behaviour Management**

- Observe targeted children – feedback frequent distractions (remove/relocate).
- Identify the children who are not participating.
- Identify and praise children who are working hard.
- Recommend 'good try' stickers.
- Sitting near to targeted children or those who may be disruptive or not listening.
- Silent signs/non-verbal reminders for appropriate behaviour.
- Ensure the children stay focused, encouraging concentration/participation.
- Support behaviour management plans for individual children.
- Whispered reminders/verbal reinforcement of class rules.
- Encouraging children to have a go.
- Promote self-esteem through agreed reward system.
- Helping transition of children from carpet to tables.

#### **Helping the teacher to teach**

- Support oral work (text and word level) with a small group.
- Encouraging children to feed back, following the correct procedures e.g. putting hand up.
- Scribing.
- Support work with additional picture clues/props/smaller version of class text.
- Help adapt questions/support answers.
- Support differentiation process.
- Provide role model for appropriate responses.

(the Early Years Team made the following comments about this particular aspect of the role)

- Could confuse children.
- Are TAs willing to undertake responsibility?
- Could cause friction.
- We have reservations about TAs taking on a more pedagogical role.

#### **Resource Management**

- Use the resources in smaller groups to reinforce main teaching objective.
- Playing games to support the learning for both less and more able.  
(not many suggestions for this aspect of the role)

#### **Oiling the Wheels**

- Encouraging children to have a go.
- Reinforce questions.
- Rephrasing of questions/requests/instructions (using suitable vocabulary).

See *Teaching Assistants*, page 91

- Echo teacher's questions/instructions.
- Using home languages/ non-verbal language/ visual cues/ props.
- Repetition.

(these strategies should lead to increased involvement, improved self-esteem and reinforcement of learning intentions)

#### **An extra Pair of Eyes/Ears**

- Making sure children are on task/ maintaining concentration.
- Being with a specific child and using small copy of Big Book.
- Observations – specific or general, particularly of children with SEN.
- Repeat questions asked by the teacher.

#### **Supervision**

- Adapt questions and give clues to targeted children.
- Sit near target group, i.e. unresponsive, lacks confidence, poor concentration.
- Support paired discussion.
- Support individual/group reading of whole class text.
- Go through differentiated spellings (word level work), basic punctuation (sentence level work).

## GRANGE DfEE Materials

### **The role of the teaching assistant in the shared section of the literacy hour**

**Supervision** – within the whole class time, there will be spells of independent work in which teaching assistants can be expected to support slow or less able pupils.

Discuss this statement and think of examples how this could happen in practice.

### **The role of the teaching assistant in the shared section of the literacy hour**

**An extra pair of eyes** – the most obvious benefit of teaching assistants is the presence of an extra pair of eyes (and ears) for:

Discuss this statement and think of practical examples of how this could happen.

### **The role of the teaching assistant in the shared section of the literacy hour**

**Behaviour Management** – Although the teacher has responsibility for behaviour management, teaching assistants can help to prevent and manage incipient behaviour problems by...

Discuss this statement and think of practical examples of how a teaching assistant can do this.

### **The role of the teaching assistant in the shared section of the literacy hour**

**Oiling the wheels** – Even when the teacher is leading from the front, there is a role for the teaching assistant in oiling the discussion by...

Consider this statement and also think of how the activities you discuss can be useful

### **The role of the teaching assistant in the shared section of the literacy hour**

**Teaching Assistant** – confident teaching (classroom) assistants may move into a more pedagogical role in helping the teacher deliver the lesson.

Consider this statement and think of different examples of how this can take place – please give examples from your own or observed practice, where possible.

### **The role of the teaching assistant in the shared section of the literacy hour**

**Resource management** The use of props and resources is set to increase as the NLS promotes greater interactivity in whole class time. Recent training has promoted the use of whiteboards, flashcards, postboxes, marker pens, overheads, magnetic letters and more, aimed at encouraging pupils to apply themselves and get involved with the lesson.

Teaching assistants may well have a role in storing and maintaining such resources, and in the lesson itself can...

Discuss this statement and consider examples of how this can happen in practice.

See *Teaching Assistants*, page 91

## GRANGE ASSISTANT REVIEWS

### **C&G certificate in Learning Support**

The City & Guilds 'certificate in learning support' course lasts one year. Teaching sessions take place on one afternoon every three weeks. The course is divided into three units, one unit per term, and comprises the following:

1. Planning
2. Implementation
3. Evaluation

The teaching sessions are related to these three categories. For example,

- Planning learning support
- Effective working relationships
- Selecting and adapting resources
- Positive behaviour
- Evaluating learning programmes

Each unit is sub-divided, and after each teaching session there is practical work to be done, which can comprise

- A piece of writing
- Being observed and assessed on the job
- Keeping logs about situations that have arisen in the course of everyday work, and the responses made to those situations

The course is interesting, but also quite demanding, especially on time. It is wise to keep up to date with the coursework. It is also essential to have the co-operation and support of the class teachers who you work with, as advice and relevant documents such as lesson plans and IEPs are often needed. One member of staff will be assigned as a mentor, and another as an assessor.

A work-based project of your own choice must also be completed as part of the coursework.

Mrs Paula Pearson  
Tuesday 27 March 2001

GRANGE ASSISTANT REVIEWS

**TRACY SAVAGE AND LINDA SHUMARKER  
MARCH 2001**

Last autumn we were both asked to go on a Teaching Assistants course, to be run for four days over a two month period.

The course was to cover the teacher assistant uses in the literacy and numeracy hour.

The first day everyone made their introductions, the people running the courses and us 'the pupils' to one another and we were told what the course entailed and what we needed to do to prepare for the next three sessions.

The second and third days were very different, each day was split in two, half the day was to cover the literacy, the other half to cover numeracy; each session was split into watching a video, some practical work, notes to take and our chance to answer any questions we had. Both these days were very enjoyable.

The last day we both found was very rushed; a lot seemed to be crammed into what we thought may have been better if they had added an extra half a day.

All in all the course was very enjoyable and we would both recommend it.

## GRANGE ASSISTANT REVIEW

### Manchester Project about my STA course

To begin with I was very nervous about the course. We had a good introduction though, in the form of a Maths and English workshop, which got us into the swing of writing essays and doing our homework.

Once the course had started properly I really began to enjoy it. There is a lot of work and sometimes I feel we are rushing through it. There is always an opportunity to ask questions or talk to the tutor during lunch if you want to. The students talk to each other about assignments or any problems we might have and we also have a list of each other's phone numbers so that we can keep in touch during the week. The course tutors provide us with lots of photocopied information to cut down on note taking but there are still a lot of notes to take.

Since being on this course I have learned not only from the course but also from the other students by talking and listening to how they work in their schools. The swap visit to another school to shadow another student has been interesting and informative. Many of our duties are the same or similar. Mostly the ways we are used in class are the same, although the student I visited had much more verbal interaction with the class teacher throughout the lesson. She also had many more administrative duties such as photocopying for the whole school and filing of all plans and master copies of work sheets. The teachers have that responsibility at Grange.

As well as learning new strategies for teaching children and dealing with difficult behaviour this course has been a great confidence builder. I have learned to use the computer more efficiently and feel more confident in the classroom.

Sharon Smith, teaching assistant.

PUSS BANK

**Comments by LSAs themselves: feedback about current training opportunities**

The following comments were made on the initial questionnaire and through subsequent feedback:

'As a qualified nursery nurse I have been concerned for some time about the increase in unqualified people working in a child care role. If a person can work as a classroom/learning support assistant without a qualification what incentive is there for people to study and where does that leave a person with training? What does their role become?'

'I feel that our Headteacher is very enthusiastic and supportive towards career development and that INSET days in school are commendable. However, although the LEA does offer specialist courses for assistants these are frequently oversubscribed and it is difficult to secure places. The efficient development of a more structured programme for assistants would benefit both teachers and pupils.'

'The word "relevant" should be essential in the planning and provision of courses for assistants. Too many general courses are available that do not recognise the qualifications and experience staff working in this role already have acquired. Courses pitched at the wrong level risk alienating half of those who attend.'

'In the past there have not been enough opportunities for special needs training. It would be very helpful to join with staff in other schools to talk about ideas and training.'

'I feel there are a variety of activities aimed at both SEN and mainstream, from National Curriculum Level 1 onwards. I would like to see more opportunity and qualifications made available for staff who work in the Nursery or Early Years Departments.'

'I would be interested in attending courses on a range of special needs issues. Would it be possible for courses to be pitched at different levels according to existing qualifications and training? Perhaps a beginners, intermediate and advanced system could operate.'

## **Puss Bank School**

*Professional Development Interviews for Classroom Assistants/Teaching Assistants*

### **Self Review**

(Please complete before the initial meeting)

#### **1. Role and Achievements**

What is your role within the classroom?

What do you feel you have done particularly well?

#### **2. Strengths and Areas for Development**

What strengths have you brought to the job?

What skills would you like to develop?

#### **3. Likes and Dislikes**

What do you like about your job and the school? What changes would make it better?

#### **4. School Support**

How could your team leader/ the school's management help you do your job better?

#### **5. Career Development**

What training opportunities/resources would help you with your professional development?

#### **Classroom observation**

Would you like to have your work formally observed? If so, what focus would you like the observation to have?

Final Draft

*Puss Bank School*  
**Professional Development Framework**

**Classroom Observation Sheet**

Name:

Class Group:

Agreed date and time of observation:

*General Guidance*

1. The date, time and duration of the observation should be agreed with both the Teaching Assistant and Class Teacher in advance.
2. Teacher planning for the session, which includes information on the role of the Teaching Assistant during the session, should be made available before the observation.
3. Observations may be general or focused on one specific aspect of the Teaching Assistant's work.
4. Areas to be looked at during observation could include: knowledge of child development, communication with pupils and staff, behaviour management, curriculum knowledge, knowledge and implementation of IEP targets, team working.

*Classroom Observation*

Teacher:	Activity/Children:
Target for observation	Sources of information

Time	Comments

Classroom Observation Sheet

Time	Comments

*Additional Comments*

Signed:

Date:

See *Teaching Assistants*, page 92

**CONFIDENTIAL**

*Puss Bank School*  
*Professional Development Interviews*

**Professional Development Interview Summary Sheet**

Name:

Post Held:

**Part A**

1. Record of discussion at the Professional Development Interview

2. Additional Comments

**Part B**

**Agreed Dates**

For monitoring:

For review of targets:

**Part C**

*Statement of Agreement*

We agree that the above statement is a fair summary of the professional development interview and that the content of the discussion remains confidential. Targets will be made available to the Head of the School/Chair of the Governing Body on request.

Signature:

Signature:

Date:

Date:

*Puss Bank School*

**Professional Development Framework**

**Professional Development Targets**

Name:

Year:

Department:

Development and Training Targets	How to be achieved	Date completed

**Comments:**

**Targets agreed by:**

Post Holder:

Date:

Team Leader:

Date:

## **Puss Bank School**

### *Contents of Professional Development Portfolio for Classroom Assistants/Teaching Assistants*

#### **Aim**

For all school staff to develop an individual professional development portfolio which details achievements and training.

#### *Why keep a record of Professional Development?*

A professional development portfolio:

- Provides a record of your commitment to further training.
- Links to the school commitment to Investors in People.
- Ties in with the performance management framework.
- Is useful for interviews/course applications if trying to further your career.

#### *Format*

Red ring binders with poly pockets and file dividers.

Standard format for record sheets and development interviews.

#### **Contents of files**

##### **Part 1 – Introduction**

Copy of school policy on professional development, blank forms on which to record development proposals.

The policy should include:

- Description of cycle
- preparatory activity (self evaluation/evaluation with teacher or peer)
- individual interview, evaluate old targets, set new ones, produce summary of meeting
- interim review after six months (possibly peer review with very brief report to manager to determine progress so far)

#### *Activities which constitute professional development*

Cheshire INSET days

Training days within School – with teaching staff

– specifically for Learning Support Staff

Courses at other establishments (e.g. Inscape House)

Evening classes (such as IT courses)

Observation of colleagues within Puss Bank

Visits to other schools/clinics

Supervision of students

Internet searches

Videos about SEN issues/teaching techniques

Reading books relevant to current practice

Job shadowing (e.g. physiotherapists, occupational therapists)

See *Teaching Assistants*, page

*Reading articles or Journals*

Nursery World

Times Educational Supplement

Child Education

Special Children/other NASEN publications

### **Part 2 – Career Data**

CV detailing training and experience to date, copy of job description and other relevant information.

1. Education history

2. Career history

Name, size, location of school, full or part time work, ages worked with, main roles and responsibilities, personal achievements.

3. Personal log of development activities/ courses completed to date:

Date	Activity	Hours	Outcome
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### **Part 3 – Staff Development Interview Information**

Previous year's targets, interview summaries and evaluations (including evidence such as photographs where appropriate)

### **Part 4**

Current targets

### **Part 5 – Professional Development Data**

Log of professional development activities completed throughout the year on a standard sheet. Use of 'training card' for staff to log courses/workshops attended after school, at weekends and on training days as a method of ensuring staff can benefit from sessions planned at these times without it assuming staff will work additional hours to their contract.

(For example, if support staff attended three twilight sessions on behaviour management these could be logged and a training day be taken off as time in lieu)

### **Part 6 – Course certificates**

***Puss Bank School***

*Professional Development Framework for Teaching Assistants*

**Record of Professional Development**

Name:

Academic Year:

Post:

Department:

Please record all training and development undertaken whether formal or informal. Guidance regarding the type of activity to be included is given in the Contents of the Professional Development Portfolio notes.

Date/Duration	Topic and type of activity	Learning Outcome

See *Teaching Assistants*, page 92

**What difference has this project made to us and our working life?**

At our school at the moment we have 7 LSAs working full or part time supporting children with physical special needs. We all work very much as a team, knowing each other's jobs and responsibilities as well as our own, able to fill in for each other and ready to support each other on a day to day basis.

Despite this we never really have any time to all sit as a group and discuss any issues or matters arising and realise that we often experience similar problems in the classroom and throughout the school day. With some LSAs working part time there is never a time during the week when all 7 of us are in school at the same time. This together with the difficulties of being released from duties with children means that we rarely, if ever, have any kind of LSAs' meetings.

Taking part in this project has made us focus on some of the issues we have felt for many years should be addressed. It has been very positive and during the two twilight sessions marked for this project all the LSAs have been able to meet together and have some very valuable discussions.

After the first twilight session which Maggie led everyone felt very reassured that at last a proper study was being conducted into LSAs' roles, qualifications, career structure, pay, contracts, etc. and that for the first time we feel we are being recognised and taken seriously as a profession not just the odd job person.

The second twilight session was spent making a start on drawing out our job description. This work will continue on an INSET day in July and we will be looking at and using some of the indicators of effective practice to assist us with this. It is hoped that it will lead on to the setting up of regular team meetings with LSAs and SMT to discuss any matters and adopt effective working practices throughout the school by building on each other's experiences and working out possible problems together.

Another difference that we feel the project may have made was that this year for the first time most LSAs in our school already know their hours for next year, in past years it has been left as late as September for allocation of hours to be confirmed. So it is a wonderful improvement to have the information May/June time.

*Karen*

**What difference has this project made to us and our working life?**

'We welcome the fact that the job is now being acknowledged and that the research project will raise peoples 'awareness of the job that we do. The way the project has been structured has made it interesting to read and easily accessible.'

The school has regular meetings for all the LSAs, which encourages a sharing of ideas and provides a safe place to discuss difficulties. We have recently looked at record keeping and are hoping to provide a framework of consistency between us all.

In summary the Manchester Project appears to have encouraged us to be more focused to re-evaluate our present role, to define this clearly, to state our hopes and to look forward to the future!

**The Manchester Project**

The Manchester Project has helped us think that our job is valued in all respects.

Secondly it has helped us to write up our new job descriptions.

Thirdly we now have a policy on Mentoring for new staff.

*Hansa* (Vaughan First and Middle)

### MANCHESTER PROJECT

Vaughan School has been involved in the Manchester Project for most of the time in which I have been working as a Learning Support Assistant in the school. My job as an LSA is also new to me as I am returning to work following three years without paid employment, bringing up my two young children.

Participation in the project appears to have assisted the school in examining the role of an LSA and defining it more clearly. I have found it interesting to note the comments from those who have been 'in the job' for a number of years and who have often stated how dramatically the role has changed over that time.

It is rewarding to be offered the choice to discuss together 'where we are now' and 'where we would like to be!' We have recently updated our job descriptions, which encourages a feeling of self-awareness and satisfaction when the many facets to this work are clearly stated.

In the short time Vaughan School has become involved in the Manchester Project, we have become much more aware of our roles in the school. It prompted our LSA Team to look very closely at our existing Job Descriptions and it was decided they needed to be rewritten. Our Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator arranged for our teams to start rewriting new Job Descriptions on the last INSET day. Plans were also started towards the writing of an Induction Policy for non-teaching staff; this will be a new policy to Vaughan School.

This was a great opportunity to work as a team on two very important documents.

*Jackie Class*

**The effect this project has had on my working life and me.**

**My cameo.**

I think being involved in restructuring our job descriptions was a very valuable exercise. It clearly shows when put down on paper just how flexible and hardworking we are. Not only for ourselves, but also outsiders and people looking at support work as a career.

Putting together my personal profile was good, it has given me confidence in my own abilities and I have something to show and be proud of. It helps to show the direction my training and career is going, e.g. strengths, weaknesses, etc. I believe it gives ideal opportunities for our staff to share individual ideas and expertise and brought us closer together as a team. I really hope this project helps in some way to build better career prospects in the future because we feel something definitely needs to be done to keep all the hard working, dedicated, experienced LSAs from looking to other careers with better structured prospects as we fear is already happening.

JW

**'What difference has this project made to me and my working life?'**

Over the last 6 months the SENCO together with the LSAs at Vaughan School have been discussing the issue of job descriptions.

The difference this project has made to me is that it actually made us get up and do something about it. It made us set time aside to deal with the issues and also reflect on what LSAs at Vaughan School do well.

We plan to come together to discuss and share our ideas with our SENCO. I feel sure the management team will look carefully at our suggestions and an induction package for support staff will be next on the agenda.

Being involved in the Manchester Project has been both interesting and stimulating and I feel this is an important move forward for all Learning Support staff all over the country. Hopefully, the Manchester Project will enable all Learning Support staff to gain status and recognition in their work place.

*Jackie Millington*

**HAS THE 'MANCHESTER PROJECT' MADE ANY DIFFERENCE  
TO ME AND MY ROLE?**

The Manchester Project has given me 'hope' regarding the future of Teaching Assistants during this time of dramatic change.

In the short time that I have worked in this field, I am acutely aware of the extent of professional development and expertise which is beginning to come together for Teaching Assistants. This is exciting but can be demoralising when there appears to be no defined career structure or financial remuneration. There is a sense of uncertainty within the profession, particularly for those who at present have contracts with the LEA. When the budget for this area is devolved to schools from this September (this being relevant to Harrow LEA) many of us feel insecure regarding our future.

The Manchester Project has prompted and assisted Vaughan School in looking at areas such as job descriptions, appraisals and professional development profiles for Teaching Assistants.

Our own involvement in discussing and putting ideas forward for these has assisted us in feeling a sense of 'ownership' of our future. With these processes in place I feel more secure regarding my role in the school and how much value the school places on its TA staff.

*Kate Penman  
Teaching Assistant  
21st March 2001*

### **Has the Manchester Project made any difference to you and your role?**

It was very exciting when Vaughan School were invited to take part in the Manchester Project. Being part of the project helped the Learning Support Assistant team bring many issues to the surface, some of which we have tackled e.g. Job Descriptions, Induction and Mentoring.

The difference the Manchester project has made to all our roles was that it allowed us to set aside quality time to restructure our job descriptions (1 group of LSAs general and 1 group of LSAs working with statemented children).

As an LSA general I found this exercise extremely useful since I and others in the group felt our job descriptions were very much out of date, especially since the introduction of the NLS and NNS where LSAs are providing valuable support to SEN children across the curriculum and gone are the days of just washing paint pots. Tackling this led on to the other experiences of lack of induction and mentoring. Again this project made us set aside quality time to produce draft policies to make starting a job at Vaughan School easier for new LSAs.

On a personal level having the draft mentoring policy has made me more aware of the needs of a new person coming into our school. Having a list of items to go through made it a lot easier for me to think that certain things need to be done/shown to the new person. Knowing that a new person starting has someone to go to on their own level when in doubt makes it easier for newcomers.

Being involved in the Manchester Project and going to the meetings gave me a great boost in confidence in being able to speak up and say how I felt about the role and training of LSAs; realising that it was a very common feeling amongst many LSAs, especially those who had been Support Assistants for a number of years. Meeting LSAs from other LEAs was also very beneficial as it triggered many ideas in my mind for the future.

Initially when involved with the project I felt that there would one day be a nationwide recognition of the role of LSAs with an appropriate career structure and pay scale. However, I was quite disappointed (in my interpretation of what was said) when it was mentioned that the DfEE would only be making recommendations about the report and not have anything to do with the pay structure/scale.

When these recommendations have been made who is going to carry them out?

Surinder Minhas  
Vaughan School, Harrow.

I would like to think of the work achieved so far on this project as the beginning of a procedure that will eventually extend to all schools from the first to high schools.

The use of the indicator TAs work co-operatively with teachers to support the learning and participation of pupils' has begun at Whitmore High School.

Our aim was to be attached to a specific department, in my case the department was Geography.

*To have sight of* forthcoming lesson plans. The head of Geography Seri March, has been very helpful and encouraging throughout the project and from the start gave me copies of each year from Year 8 to Year 11 lesson plans, on a half-termly basis. This enabled the TAs working out of Learning Development Department to have some idea of the lesson content before entering a classroom.

Whilst having the lesson plans ahead of lessons is very helpful, one problem I encountered was that I go into three different geography teachers' classes and they tend to teach the current topic in a different order from one another. The consequence being that you might prepare a differentiated worksheet for a particular SEN student, and then it does not get used because the class is doing something different. The second problem is the shortage of time available to do this preparatory work.

*To hold weekly meetings* (protected time) with Seri March to discuss lesson content, individual students, visitors to lessons, field trips, etc.

We were allocated the weekly meeting and I met with Seri almost every week and discussed various topics. The outcome of the meetings has been very positive. Seri mentioned that the meetings gave her cause to reflect, especially on individual students. For myself, I have felt a lot happier knowing that each week I could refer any worries or concerns regarding lessons and individual students to the head of the department and take advice from her.

*To have access* to all the resources in the department has been very useful and improved efficiency.

*To build up* a good working relationship with each teacher in the department is very beneficial for both teachers and TAs. Familiarity enables you to be honest with each other.

*To be invited* to department meetings. I have been invited to a department meeting and also to a meeting on a Staff Development Day focusing on ICT in Geography. An invitation also to present the project to a Management Board meeting. All positive outcomes, raising TAs' awareness of department procedures and plans. The Management Board meeting being particularly useful to enlighten the members of Management Board of what we were trying to achieve and also because the minutes are circulated to all members of teaching staff, instantly raising the profile of TAs.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working on this project. We have reached the stage where Seri March, Head of Geography, has suggested time be allocated for teachers and TAs to work together. For the teacher to aid TAs, to ensure the geographical aspect is there, as well as the resource, hence making/enabling the students to access/achieve the objectives of each lesson by ensuring the appropriate worksheets are available for all.

## The University of Manchester

### Indicators of effective practice with Learning Support Assistants

#### *What difference has this project made to me and my working life?*

My name is Margaret Banger and I am currently employed as Resources Coordinator by the Sensory and Communication Team (Visual Impairment) in Harrow. I first worked as a Learning Assistant in 1990 in a Primary School (First) mainly with children who had behavioural difficulties and hearing impairment as the school had a Hearing Unit. I remained with the same class up to Year 3 and was also given responsibility for a boy with specific learning difficulties.

When I followed the class on to Middle School I began working with a pupil who had visual and hearing impairment and physical difficulties and so, at this time, not only was I working in collaboration with the class teacher but had the added benefit of a linked specialist teacher from the Visual Impairment Team. I supported the pupil by adapting the curriculum resources needed, learning Braille with him and gained experience of independent integration. The specialist teacher and I also held a Braille Club which involved the whole school.

I have supported a visually impaired pupil in High School which gave me a fresh understanding of the different approaches to planning from First and Middle School to High School.

My present work involves co-ordinating the resources for our team, required by the visually impaired pupils throughout the individual schools. This entails communication with other Services, schools, RNIB, National Library for the Blind and many other agencies throughout the country, together with preparation of books and curriculum materials in Braille and large print and obtaining copyrights. As an individual Team we have accumulated extensive resources of books, worksheets, tactile maps and diagrams and equipment for all curriculum subjects, from pre-school to High School age. The central resource base is databased and it is envisaged that in the future we may be able to share our resources with other Visual Impaired Services and schools.

For visually impaired children long term planning and preparation of appropriate material is essential for their successful integration and access to the curriculum and therefore the liaison with teacher and specialist teacher is crucial.

The project has been very interesting and beneficial in various ways. The workshop of senior management, teachers and learning support assistants was in the first place very useful for exchanging views and therefore gave much food for thought.

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By the process of the various meetings we have had as a team, the focusing of planning has enabled:

- Closer links with my colleagues due to more meeting time that brings reassurances and valuable views of ways to deal with problems of adaptations and good working relationships.
- Learning from one another and so being confident that our planning strategies could be effective for other groups of pupils in schools who may have learning or physical difficulties.
- Awareness of each other's role and improvements that can be made to develop and share each individual's expertise, information and tips.
- Developing uses of the Internet and Websites, and accessing this information via a newsletter for the team in the future.

I am also aware that it is very important not to rely on our bank of resources but to continually develop these for individual children's needs.

The team's discussions on the project focused us together that we should strive to ensure that the children within our Service are as independent as possible by providing the best access, thus developing their self-esteem, social awareness and confidence. In this respect, from my experience, class teachers are encouraged and grateful for the planning with the Learning Support Assistant and Specialist Teacher which gives them more confidence with the disabled pupil and the feedback from the lessons is constructive.

I would like to say finally that the project has also identified many issues with which I have been sympathetic for many years. My hope is that in the future Learning Support Assistants will be able to follow a career path, if they so wish, into the teaching profession, or even have recognition by their own professional body in order to reap the rewards of appropriate contracts and pay structures that they richly deserve for their enthusiasm, varied expertise and commitment and support to the teaching profession. At the end of the day, the children matter most and the job satisfaction is second to none but this is not an excuse for complacency.

## Manchester Research Project Report for Conference 28th June 2000

I am currently working as an LSA with a child who has no useful sight and who is a Braille user. The main focus of my job is to prepare Braille texts and tactile diagrams and to adapt equipment so that the child has equal access to the curriculum. I also transcribe Brailled work prepared by the child so that it can be marked. I support in lessons when necessary, but encouraging independent learning is a key element of the job.

Because independence is a key element, planning is vital, it is impossible to produce a Brailled worksheet or a tactile diagram at the drop of a hat and sitting beside the child verbalising lessons is undesirable. As a result, members of the Visual Impairment team are, I think, persistent in the pursuit of planning time and/or early access to schemes of work. Because of this we have chosen to analyse the planning procedures we follow as the main focus for this research project. We have done this with the intention of passing on any transferable information we identify as particularly useful.

On a personal level, having had the opportunity to listen to other LSAs' experience of planning at the previous meeting, and analyse our own procedures, I have concluded that as an LSA in the Visual Impairment Service, I may have several advantages. These advantages include: the support of a teacher from the Visual Impairment Service who makes the initial approach to class teachers and who can be called upon if things are not going to plan; a very specific job description designed by the Service rather than by individual schools which underscores the importance of the child's independence; a child with very obvious needs; and finally, the ability to support the teacher in a specialised way, i.e. the preparation and transcription of Braille documents. It is my experience, thus far, that there is a general understanding of the need to plan and co-operation from teachers is, on the whole, forthcoming.

I think that inclusion in this project has reinforced the pivotal role of planning throughout the team and the benefits are apparent. The child I work with is due to move schools in September, and already an extensive amount of work has been done to prepare for her arrival. As a result, we have access to schemes of work for next year so that preparation can begin, and staff appear very positive about the prospect of teaching a visually impaired child.

For me, another important aspect of being involved in this Research project has been the opportunity to meet with the other LSAs in the Visual Impairment Team, the Resources Coordinator and the Advisory Teacher who heads the service. These regular meetings have, I believe, had several positive effects. They have increased the cohesiveness of the team; highlighted the supportive nature of the team; given us an opportunity to share working practice; provided a platform for new ideas, some of which sound extremely enterprising (!) and finally, it has given us an insight into some of the ideas an

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enlightened team leadership is trying to incorporate into LEA thinking. It seems that the Service has recognised that its LSAs could be a valuable resource and once trained, it's a bit of a waste to lose them. Skills are often transferable and informed reallocation of roles is perhaps a more intelligent option to continually ending temporary contracts and losing experience. Certainly being part of a team where you feel your efforts are appreciated is some compensation for the uncertainties arising from temporary contracts and low pay!

The research project has reminded us that most learning assistants are operating without some of our advantages. Many do not have the 'built in' preparation time and are constantly juggling the pupils' immediate needs with the need to prepare something 'for the next lesson'. We wondered how we could generalise our best practice within the schools in which we work, to the benefit of the other learning assistants and pupils.

Much of the work I have prepared is saved on disk and could be copied and modified or adapted to meet the needs of many different pupils. With this in mind, in my school, we have started a catalogue of resources which we intend to extend to include all work on disk as well as worksheets, maps, diagrams, models, video notes etc. This work will then be generally available within the learning development department of the school. A similar catalogue is being compiled at the central service so that resources can be moved easily from school to school according to the pupils' needs.

Working together on this project has welded us together as a team and this has been of great benefit to us. We have met regularly and exchanged news and ideas, learning from each other and sharing good practice. We have explored web sites for resources on the internet, and this has led to a 'learn to use the internet day' at our borough teachers' centre. Our service has also arranged a 'Braille maths day', where we will be learning the correct method of laying out various mathematical problems, and presenting a favourite piece of work to each other.

We feel now we should be doing these activities as a school and even as a borough. All too often, particularly in a small school, the learning assistant operates in isolation, cut off from the stimulation of fresh ideas. This project has made me feel part of a borough-wide, even nation-wide group, with common aims and similar problems. This can only be to the benefit of everyone in education.

## LSA RESEARCH PROJECT

*A Cameo by Petina Clarey*

The project has made *all* the staff, i.e. SMT teachers, therapists and the health adviser, more aware of the full and varied role of an LSA at Parkesfield, which is a primary school for children with MLD/PD.

Prior to the project, each discipline within the school was obviously conscious of how LSAs fitted in with their responsibility but not so informed of the work we do with others. Regular meetings, discussions and a revised job description have dispelled any confusion about the nature of our role.

The LSA project has increased my confidence in others and myself and hopefully they in me. It has given me hope that there will come a day when there's a nationwide recognition of the fundamental role LSAs play in our children's education and an appropriate pay/career structure is formed as a result. It has brought us closer together I feel as a whole school team developing a greater understanding and a renewed respect of the part we each play to make our school a success as recently confirmed by the positive feedback from our OFSTED inspection.

We have helped one another in collecting evidence of our achievements to make personal profiles. It has highlighted areas for improvement and we have trained each other to brush up on existing skills e.g. using specialised computer programs like Boardmaker.

A handful of LSAs have gone on to teacher training if they've had the money, opportunity and ambition: seemingly the only route for advancement at the moment. This is a giant leap that could be bridged by other qualifications perhaps. I love my work and cannot envisage doing anything else. It is a shame that good LSAs have been lost to other professions due to disillusionment at not being able to progress substantially within their chosen field: hopefully this project will be able to help change that!

I would just like to add that I feel the title of Nursery Nurse a little outdated as the role has changed over the years and NNEB is inappropriate as there are now other new qualifications. The term LSA is preferable but it still does not accurately convey our role and LSAs' roles vary in different establishments; the project has highlighted this (I appreciate that a generic term is needed for the purposes of the research).

At our school the care assistants are all NVQ qualified and by choice do most, if not all, the work that nursery nurses do: they receive an enhanced care assistant pay due to their qualification. I suspect this is not always the case and know of people at other schools who have qualified from full time courses and are working as classroom assistants because they can't get a NN post: or as low paid nursery nurses at private nurseries; and indeed Social Services are

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making a vast number of Nursery Officers redundant in Salford. The standard of LSAs must be very high and competition for posts great. There should, I feel, be one set of grades for all LSAs and one pay scale that covers both qualified and unqualified LSAs. Employers should, by law, pay qualified staff more regardless of their exact job title. I hope that results of this research will lead to this being implemented.

### **What difference has this project made to me and my working life?**

Having attended the Introductory Workshop Day regarding the Role, Training and Management of Learning Support Assistants I came away feeling much more aware of other LSA roles and how they vary from establishment to establishment and person to person. It also made me aware that here at Parkes Field we are fortunate in the way we are valued as part of the multi-disciplinary team within the school. The projects we have undertaken as part of the research have increased this awareness of our roles within the school life.

The course allowed Mrs Lynn Monks (SMT member and LSA Manager with whom I attended the course) and me to come back to school with a task which would involve and help all our LSAs and other school staff.

Taking part in the research has given me an opportunity to become involved in, and take some responsibility for, bringing our LSAs together and to instil a positive task that will help develop their own career and also help in creating a career structure for all LSAs. The enthusiasm, shown by the LSAs boosted my confidence, as they were keen to develop the ideas and bring in new ones.

The project has also brought me into more discussion with the Headteacher and SMT and through their support with the project, I feel more confident and aware of my role within the school and how it can be developed.

While completing our new job description I became much more aware of how vast and varied our role is. I also felt that because all staff were involved in discussion about the job description, they too became more aware of our capabilities and role. This awareness is vital when we are all part of a multi-disciplinary team and each role is valued and appreciated to enable efficient team work to meet the needs of our children.

The project has proved to be a form of incentive too and made me look at areas of my training and skills that need up-dating, e.g. ICT (including Word Processing!), legal matters regarding children in care, etc. Having all worked together, as LSAs on our Personal Profiles, I know I can learn skills from others e.g. AAC officer, and Moving and Handling Officer.

It has been helpful to learn, from being part of this project, that we are not alone in thinking that we are in a career that can only go 'so far.' Hopefully through this project the DfEE will realise that there are a lot of very experienced, highly qualified, hard working and dedicated LSAs who need to be recognised. One way this could be realised is by having a recognised career and training structure that could be related to an improved pay scale/system. In conclusion I would say that the project has brought our school's LSAs together but without isolating us from other team members, i.e. teachers, SMT. Instead it has brought all the school together in raising an awareness of our role through our practice, job description and Personal Development Profiles. This along with the motivation it has inspired has increased my willingness to learn and develop new skills to promote my career. The results of this will reflect in the most important part of my role as an LSA, to give the children I work with the best possible care and education. After all this is a job I love!