

GUIDANCE ON THE DEPLOYMENT OF SUPPORT STAFF IN SCHOOLS

This guide is intended to provide support and advice to councils, managers and teachers in the effective deployment of support staff. The aim is to increase the capacity of school leaders and teaching staff to focus on raising attainment and achievement.

An important pillar of the 'National Agreement: A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century' was the aim to remove non-teaching burdens from teachers. The provisions agreed were:

- There will be significant investment in additional support staff. These additional staff should include the full range of posts recommended in McCrone specifically bursar, administrative and ICT support to schools. The resources should enable approximately the equivalent of an additional 3,500 staff.
- Classroom Assistants will be introduced to secondary schools as part of the general uplift in resources for support staff.
- The deployment of these additional resources will be determined locally on the basis of local need and within the context of devolved school management arrangements.
- All schools must have somebody available to deal with routine emergencies and contact parents during the pupil day. This resource will be found through the review of existing support staff arrangements or as part of the additional support staff resources.
- A list of tasks, which should not be routinely carried out by teachers has been agreed and is attached at Annex E. These tasks would generally be undertaken by support staff thereby allowing the particular skills and experience of the teacher to be deployed most effectively.

The Annex E list is provided in Appendix 1.

REPORTS

A number of reports have been produced from 1999 onwards examining and/or commenting on the respective roles of classroom teachers and support staff, aimed at reducing the non teaching duties of teachers. A commentary on the reports is in Appendix 2.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

The SNCT has developed 'Principles of Good Practice' which should underpin the deployment and management of support staff.

- (1) The overall aim should be to reduce teacher workload through the removal of non-teaching tasks and to enhance the learning experience of all pupils.
- (2) The funding provided at school level should be used to achieve the main aim and the process should be clear and transparent. At council and school level there should be a clear understanding of the numbers available for deployment, the criteria for allocation to schools and the range of activities such support staff should undertake.
- (3) At school level there should be consultation with teachers on the deployment of support staff. Allocation procedures and criteria should be agreed and consultation and information should ensure that the system is understood and accepted as fair.
- (4) Effectiveness of deployment of support staff should be monitored at both school and local authority levels. This should be part of the monitoring role of LNCTs and benchmarks of good practice should be agreed and built into the quality assurance process.
- (5) Where support staff and teachers work together there should be opportunities for liaison and development of collegiality.
- (6) Training of support staff should be provided to increase effectiveness and to enable additional non-teaching tasks to be undertaken.
- (7) Training for teachers in how to work with and direct the input of support staff should be developed and made available to teachers.

The SNCT's view is that examples of good practice should be shared within councils and between councils. This may be facilitated by councils sending examples of proven, good practice to the SNCT Joint Secretaries for posting on the SNCT website.

MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

Support Staff in schools cover a range of job roles, including clerical and administrative roles, school librarians, school technicians and ICT support staff, classroom and pupil support assistants. The degree of contact with classroom teachers and the roles played in undertaking non teaching work that would otherwise have been carried out by teachers, will vary across the spectrum of support staff roles.

In all support staff roles, it is essential that clear guidance and instruction is given in relation to duties and responsibilities and that there is clarity in the respective roles of both support staff and classroom teachers. The effective management of support staff and their interaction with classroom teachers is the responsibility of headteachers.

Management Guidance on the deployment of Support Staff within schools is provided in Appendix 3 of this paper. The guidance builds on that previously issued by the Scottish Executive and the General Teaching Council for Scotland in relation to Classroom Assistants

Annex B of the Scottish Executive's guidance is provided in Appendix 4 of this paper. This gives details of roles, duties, responsibilities of classroom assistants; the interface and interaction with classroom teachers and the classroom teacher's responsibilities; and the responsibilities of headteachers in managing the employment conditions, the personal development and training, and the overall deployment of classroom assistants within a school.

The General Teaching Council for Scotland's (GTCS) which complements the Scottish Executive's guidance, has four core objectives:

- to provide background information to highlight issues related to increasing involvement of classroom assistants in schools;
- to suggest ways in which classroom assistants could be involved in supporting teachers and pupils;
- to identify core professional development activities;
- to highlight professional issues that need to be addressed.

APPENDIX 1

ANNEX E OF THE NATIONAL AGREEMENT

Annex E is the list of tasks which should not routinely be carried out by teachers. The list is illustrative and not exhaustive. These tasks would generally be undertaken by support staff thereby allowing the particular skills and experience of the teacher to be deployed most effectively:

- The supervision of pupils within the school grounds, in dining and/or recreation areas during school hours but outwith scheduled teacher class contact time;
- Administration of the school meals service, including collection of money and issue of tickets;
- Collection/collation of data for the school meals service;
- Documenting and maintaining pupil disciplinary records;
- Administrative elements of pupil welfare requirements, including support of guidance staff with routine documentation and information dispersal;
- Reception and telephonist duties;
- First aid and administration of drugs;
- Administration and documentation relating to out-of-school visits/work experience/visiting groups etc;
- Copy typing/filing/photocopying;
- Administrative detail of register/absence procedures/issue of standard letters;
- Non-professional aspects of school reporting procedures, preparation of envelopes, transfer of information, photocopying, filing etc;
- Inputting of assessment data;
- Transmission of recorded data to external bodies;
- Organising and obtaining supply cover;
- Administrative aspects of resourcing, stocktaking, ordering, checking and invoice reconciliation;

- Property management;
- Repair and maintenance of IT and AV resources;
- Recording of educational broadcasts;
- Administration of after-school-care

APPENDIX 2

SUMMARY OF REPORTS

Time for Teaching – Improving Administration in Schools, HMIE Accounts Commission for Scotland, 1999

'Time for Teaching' identified that administration burdens on teachers should be reduced by using administration and clerical staff more effectively. This report was drawn upon by A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century, The Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Professional Conditions of Service of Teachers, 2000 which expressed the view that teachers must be able to focus on tasks directly related to teaching.

The Impact of Additional Support Staff Provided by the Teachers' Agreement' (Wilson, Davidson and Rankin 2005)

The impact of the implementation of this aspect of the National Agreement has been reviewed by research commissioned by the SNCT from SCORE: 'The Impact of Additional Support Staff Provided by the Teachers' Agreement' (Wilson, Davidson and Rankin 2005).

This research concluded that "the key message from this research is that local authorities have begun to appoint additional support staff so that teachers may concentrate on those aspects of the job that require their professional expertise". However, the researchers also comment on the lack of clarity about how support staff may best be used. The 'Insight' to the research is available on the SNCT website.

Teacher Working Time Research' (Menter et al 2006)

The Faculty of Education of the University of Glasgow was commissioned by the SNCT to carryout research to provide evidence on whether commitments on teachers' working week have been met. This was done via the use of time-use diaries combined with both qualitative and quantitative research to attempt to contextualise the data and to provide an insight into local policies and strategies that affect teacher workload.

From this research one of the areas in which teachers felt there had been some 'degree of empowerment' was the better use of support staff (5.19). One of the areas where teachers felt there had been 'a sense of disempowerment' was in the increase of paperwork which left less time for the activities of teaching and learning (5.20). When asked to look at changes they would like to see to improve their working lives the reduction of paperwork was included in the list of major concerns (5.21). This does not mean that the use of support staff to carryout administrative tasks would be the most effective deployment: For

example the research concludes that one of the positive benefits of the National Agreement has been classroom assistance (5.23) and that “improved classroom assistants/staff assistants and systems”(6.9) has been a positive change. The researchers highlighted that further improvement could be achieved if classroom assistants were “trained and more widely available to secondary classroom teachers’. This research is available on the SNCT website.

Audit Scotland: A first stage review of the cost and implementation of the teachers’ agreement A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century (2006)

Part 3 of the Audit Scotland report outlined some of the difficulties that caused delay in the recruitment of support staff and commented that although the roles undertaken by support staff match those expected under the National Agreement the effect of the posts has not yet been felt by all classroom teachers. Audit Scotland found that teachers do not, in general, perceive a real reduction in administration tasks. Audit Scotland argue that change may come over time as support staff: “are further integrated within the school environment and teachers develop an appreciation and understanding of their role.”

HMIE: Teaching Scotland’s Children – A Report on Progress in Implementing ‘A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century’ (2006)

HMIE comment on the Audit Scotland (op cit) review’s findings that by April 2006 the total number of ‘equivalent staff’ recruited was “just short” of 3,500 and went on to comment:

“These improvements, however, had not taken place across all authorities and their remained room for further development in some. Overall though, while there had been limited progress in some schools in meeting proposals, in most education authorities there had been benefits, and in some cases, significant benefits.”(page 16)

The introduction of business managers and clerical assistants was viewed as having had a significant impact on the time available to senior promoted staff for their key tasks. Whereas the impact on classroom teachers from classroom and support assistants was reported to be relieving administrative burdens on teachers and to also be having a positive impact in improving provision for pupils.

APPENDIX 3

Management Guidance on the Deployment of Support Staff in Schools

1. Introduction

1.1. This guidance is intended to assist education authorities and schools to improve teacher efficiency by allowing them to concentrate their professional abilities on teaching through the deployment of support staff to undertake non teaching tasks. The guidance covers important issues such as job design, management and supervision, recruitment, screening and training. As this is not a uniform national programme, there is considerable discretion left for local decisions to be taken and local strategies to be developed. This guidance will not, therefore, answer every question but it will provide a framework within which issues can be addressed at the appropriate level.

2. Job design and competences

2.1. Support staff are expected to work under the overall direction of headteachers in a variety of roles that reduce teachers' administrative workloads. Job design and competencies should be developed for the range of different roles undertaken including: clerical and administrative roles; school librarians; school technicians and ICT support staff; classroom and pupil support assistants.

3. Line management and supervision

3.1 Support staff should have an identified line manager who will be responsible for their overall job design, the identification and meeting of training needs, performance review, feedback and discipline, as well as acting as a first point of contact for any queries on personnel matters etc (more detailed personnel queries are likely to be dealt with by the local authority). In most cases this is likely to be the headteacher/promoted member of teaching staff or senior officer manager/technician.

3.2 Where support staff such as classroom and pupil support assistants are working for all or most of their time with one teacher, it makes sense for that teacher to direct the assistant's work. Authorities should consider the need for additional guidance for teachers and their training needs, particularly for teachers taking on this role for the first time (and, as experienced assistants are recruited or developed, consider allocating these staff to teachers in such cases). Authorities should also ensure that teachers' line managers keep the situation under review and that such teachers are not required to undertake a management role.

3.3 If classroom and pupil support assistants are required to work across a number of classes then there will need to be a clearly established method for allocating the assistant's time between classes, and it is expected that the headteacher (or depute) would take responsibility for ensuring that this is the case and that the system is functioning effectively. In many cases, it will be sensible to agree a timetable for the assistant. The headteacher (or depute) will also need to bear in mind the need for additional liaison time between the assistant and the teachers, and probably between teachers as well.

3.4 Authorities are also advised to have a nominated officer(s) within the authority able to take an overview of the deployment of support staff and provide management direction to support staff, teachers and head teachers as appropriate

4. Classroom teachers

4.1 One of the objectives in the effective deployment of support staff is to contribute to the raising of pupil attainment and achievement by enhancing teachers' time to teach. It will not detract in any sense from the role and responsibilities of teachers but will reaffirm their professionalism by relieving them of tasks which can be carried out by a member of support staff. The exact role of the teacher in relation to support staff will vary according to how support staff are deployed, managed and supervised in the particular school and authority in which the teacher is working and time will be required for liaison purposes.

4.2 A teacher will need to be aware of the abilities and strengths of the assistant providing support in the classroom and where an assistant is working for more than one teacher it will be helpful for this to be communicated between them. A teacher with an assistant in their class can take the initiative in providing new opportunities for the assistant and in providing advice on how to perform tasks better or more quickly. Their identification of development needs should also feed into more formal training in consultation with line management. Feedback is important, from classroom teachers to assistants and from teachers to the headteacher or formal line manager. Liaison time would need to be appropriately managed and built into the school's Working Time Agreement.

5. Training and qualifications

5.1 Appropriate training and development should be provided to all support staff to enable them to fulfill the duties of the post.

5.2 Further training should be provided to enable them to extend the range of tasks they can perform and improve the quality of their support to teachers and pupils.

5.3 Such training should be relevant to the particular job design(s) developed by the authority and take into account the general competences required of support staff.

6. Terms and conditions

6.1 Terms and conditions are the responsibility of the local authorities as employers and a matter for the local authorities and recognised trade unions.

6.2 Hours of work are the responsibility of the local authority as the employer. It is common practice to employ support staff on a term-time basis, however authorities will need to consider how time is made available for off-the-job training and, if this is to take place outside of school time, ensure that contracted hours reflect this.

6.3 School managers should ensure that support staff are not required to carry out duties beyond the requirements of their role and responsibilities.

Scottish Executive Advice

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE FOR CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

Annex B

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

- B1. Classroom assistants work under the direction and supervision of teachers in order to help promote effective learning and teaching. They carry out tasks delegated to them by teachers and refer back to teachers issues requiring the exercise of professional judgement. The following list provides examples of the kinds of tasks which may legitimately be delegated to classroom assistants and is based on job descriptions already in use in education authorities. It is not intended to be a complete list of all the tasks that a classroom assistant could perform; nor is it intended that a single assistant would be able to take on all the tasks on the list.
- B2. The classroom assistant has a contribution to make in 4 major areas:
- the effective organisation and use of resources
 - the quality of care and welfare of pupils
 - the quality of learning and teaching in the classroom
 - the needs of pupils in effectively accessing the curriculum.
- B3. Examples of how the assistant can contribute to or support these areas of work are given below. The list is divided into 2 parts. The first is of tasks which an assistant should be able to carry out after a short period of induction training and with straightforward guidance from the classroom teacher. These are, in the main, administrative practical and organisational tasks. The second part covers tasks which are more focused on supporting the learning activities of pupils under the direction of the classroom teacher. It is expected that classroom assistants will need additional training in some of these tasks, although this will depend upon the previous training, qualifications and experience of each assistant.

Part 1

- **contribute to the effective organisation and use of resources**

examples:

- organising and maintaining the stock of materials and distributing resources
 - maintaining, and cataloguing collections of resources e.g. libraries, collections of computer software, mathematics equipment
 - preparing classroom materials by duplicating, setting out and clearing away equipment, making booklets
 - making displays e.g. mounting examples of children's work, pictures, interest tables under the supervision of teaching staff
 - recording educational television and radio programmes
 - helping pupils to follow instructions e.g. when moving to group activities and to find resources needed
 - providing help to pupils in organising their work e.g. following classroom routines for placing work in folders or marking trays
 - providing relevant information to teachers' records and reports on pupils' progress
 - providing support to pupils in the dining hall.
- **support the quality of learning and teaching in the classroom**

examples:

- supporting children's play activities e.g. by listening and talking with children, joining in play activities, supporting individual children where they need help
- playing games which practice skills, encouraging sharing, turn taking and co-operation

- encouraging children's oral language development through play, books, stories and personal interaction
- supporting literacy development by, for example, reading or telling stories and rhymes, guiding them to information books, labelling children's drawings and models and providing an audience for their reading activities
- supporting numeracy development by counting and matching games and rhymes, practising number bonds and "tables", building with shapes and developing appropriate language, and supporting practical measurement activities
- supporting practical activities in the classroom, planned as part of the teacher's programme, e.g. baking, gardening
- supervising and supporting pupils while they undertake work set by the teacher
- supporting record keeping by completing checklists of tasks with individual pupils where appropriate.
- **contribute to the quality of care and welfare of pupils**

examples:

- building good relationships in contacts with pupils
- encouraging good standards of pupil behaviour
- supervising non-teaching areas e.g. corridors, cloakrooms, tuck shops, dining rooms, playgrounds
- supervising classes during "wet playtimes"
- escorting pupils within and outwith the premises e.g. between classrooms, to home or hospital, on educational visits, swimming lessons, sports events
- providing comfort and care for minor accidents, upsets or ailments e.g. cuts and bruises (reporting to teaching staff if considered serious)

- helping children who need support in putting on coats, shoes etc. whilst encouraging independence.

Part 2

- **support the needs of pupils in effectively accessing the curriculum**

examples:

- building a positive relationship with pupil and supporting the classroom/school ethos
- developing good teamwork with the class teacher and other staff who are supporting pupils; e.g. learning support teachers and SEN auxiliaries
- preparing the classroom for aspects of the day's work; e.g. setting up the art area, selecting measurement containers for mathematics, setting up computer for word processing, setting out science apparatus for an investigation or experiment
- supporting pupils in paying attention, concentrating and staying on task
- providing appropriate praise and encouragement to pupils during tasks
- supporting children working together to encourage teamwork and co-operation
- providing support to pupils in their classroom learning; e.g. use of computers and general class activities;
- helping with tasks where there are physical difficulties, whilst encouraging independence and ensuring safety.

General competences

With the support of training, classroom assistants should work towards developing good

- relationships with pupils, teachers, parents and other staff
- understanding of the importance of confidentiality
- knowledge of child protection and safety procedures

- skills in oral communication, writing and numeracy
- administrative and organisational skills
- technical and ICT skills
- skills in working as a member of a team
- skills which facilitate, encourage and support learning
- working knowledge of children's development and learning
- working knowledge of aspects of the primary curriculum.