

The VQ Support Work in Schools was developed in 2004 as a generic qualification for all support staff roles to ensure that all members of the support staff team could be given the opportunity for formal development. The qualification allows candidates to choose from over 40 units aimed at different occupational areas ranging from teaching support to software installation.

STAR has been involved with the VQ since its pilot stage in 2004, delivering in the North East of England and across Yorkshire. Lindsey Bradbury STARs operations director sat on the national steering group to assist with its development and in December 2004 STAR became the first City and Guilds accredited centre to offer the qualifications.

STAR has now delivered over 240 VQ Support Work in School qualifications at both Level 2 and 3 with achievement rates of 88% and has received excellent feedback.

Tracey Bellwood a Kirklees Teaching Assistant who had previously completed the Teaching Assistant Level 2 NVQ with STAR and has now gone on to complete the VQ Level 3 diploma said



*'The qualification delivery was excellent, I found the workshop sessions very beneficial and they enabled me to network with other support staff in other schools, which is something I have never had the opportunity to do before.'*

*The units I most enjoyed doing was 'Liaise effectively with parents' and 'Support pupils during learning activities' as these are both aspects that I do on a daily basis in my role working with special needs children.'*

*I found that I learnt much more about the way the school operates in particularly the school policies which I am now fully aware of. Before the qualification I didn't even know where they were kept. The qualification has assisted me to gain more confidence in my role and within myself I am now looking forward to doing the Teaching Assistant Level 3 NVQ.'*



Carolyn Stephenson of John F Kennedy Primary School in Sunderland has worked for the school for ten years as a Lunchtime Supervisor and although she had extensive experience of her role within the school, she did not have any vocational qualification to substantiate this achievement.

Carolyn completed the VQ Level 2 award within 5 months and since completing the qualification applied for a new role as Lunchtime Supervisory Coordinator. Carolyn was successful in her application and was appointed in January 07. Further to this, Carolyn's enjoyment of the course gave her the confidence to enrol on a Teaching Assistant NVQ Level 2 course thus providing further professional development.

Val Young of Springwater School in North Yorkshire has completed the VQ Level 2 and is currently undertaking the NVQ Level 3 Teaching Assistant.

Before undertaking the VQ Val was a voluntary mid day supervisor for the school, keen to progress to a paid position she jumped at the chance of gaining a qualification relevant to her job role when approached by the school. Following completion of the VQ Level 2 Val applied for a paid job at the school and was successful she feels this was entirely down to having the qualification.

VAL is now currently a general teaching assistant and is undertaking the NVQ Level 3 Teaching Assistant where she hopes in the future to progress to an advanced teaching assistant. Val said:

*'The qualification has definitely built my confidence, I now feel comfortable to speak to parents etc using the correct terminology. The*



*course has taught me never to doubt myself, not to be afraid to ask questions and has shown me that I do have the ability to do anything I put my mind to.'*

Maureen Peart School Improvement Officer for School Support Staff for Kirklees Council has said about the qualifications and STAR:

*'I welcome the introduction of the SWiS qualification for the flexibility it provides in giving colleagues from all disciplines within the schools workforce the opportunity of taking an award bearing qualification; it has built self esteem and confidence in our trainees and I am delighted by the completion rate which we have achieved . I welcome the partnership which we enjoy with STAR training as we share high aspirations and a desire to facilitate high quality training opportunities for our trainees.'*

For more information please contact STAR using the details below.

