

Establishment name:	Gisburn Road Community Primary School
Lancashire no.	13/042
Contact name:	Mrs June Banks
Email:	head@gisburnroad.lancs.sch.uk
Telephone no.	01282 812287
Award granted:	Good Practice
Project title:	'To improve standards of Teaching and Learning by enhancing the role of Classroom Support Assistants'

Project summary

- The skill and expertise of Teaching Assistants varied considerably, as did the way they were used by teachers.
- Greater cost-effectiveness was needed in order to sustain the funding costs.
- There were also issues with PPA cover and we wanted to remove two half-hour "assemblies" each week which were not examples of "good practice".
- Teaching Assistant and class teachers worked together at developing T A skills and providing support and enhanced differentiation for pupils.
- In the second year, most teaching assistants remained with the same class teacher to consolidate their partnership and afterwards were reorganised to form new partnerships, and some changed key stages to extend skills and experience.
- The HLTA line manager post was an integral part of the initiative and provided intensive training for Teaching Assistants.
- The timetable was reorganised to provide a good infrastructure to enable time for teachers to plan effectively, including the incorporation of objectives for support staff.
- Annual reviews and performance management were used to monitor progress.
- The result has been an improved team of well-motivated professionals, a more enriched curriculum, increased support and a reduction in underachievement across the school as reflected in our PIPs data.

Specific aspect of practice to be accredited?

To assist workforce remodelling and improve effective teaching and learning by enhancing the role of support staff and providing quality training and support for all staff.



Aspect of Every Child Matters addressed:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Be healthy | <input type="checkbox"/> Stay Safe | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enjoy and achieve |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make a positive contribution | <input type="checkbox"/> Achieve economic well-being | |

What were you hoping to achieve?

- To provide appropriate classroom support for pupils and teachers.
- To provide quality support for pupils in order to reduce underachievement.
- To increase the confidence of and impact of classroom support staff as part of an effective teaching and learning team.
- To ensure that workforce reform had the maximum impact within the school and raised achievement.

How did you identify the need for this practice?

Despite our hard work over several years the end of KS2 Test results were still below average and the school's PIPS results 2004/05 showed significant pupil underachievement in both Maths and Reading in most year-groups. Socio-Economic information showed pockets of deprivation. The overall multi-deprivation factor in our Lancashire School information Profile was a score of C. However, a number of Super Output Areas, where a significant percentage of children live, had scores of D. More families were getting into debt for School Meals.

Despite involvement in the SEAL project and good PHSHE and behaviour strategies, the self-esteem of some children remained low and an increasing number of children were displaying emotional problems due to home factors such as split families, financial difficulties and lack of parental encouragement and support.

The number of Teaching Assistants had increased by Sep 2003 to implement the Workforce Remodelling agreement. Each Teaching Assistant, apart from in Early Years, worked with two or three classes and tended to withdraw groups of children for specific work.

However, they had different levels of skill, confidence and experience and the way they were used varied from class to class. In-school training was limited but some staff did opt for GNVQ courses in their own time. In some classes, Teaching Assistants were used more appropriately than in others and the confidence of some support staff needed to be boosted in order for cost effectiveness to be achieved.

The removal of the 24 tasks from teachers was putting undue pressure on School Office Staff, who were also having to deal with the reorganisation and training related to the rapid changes related to the move to the Local Authorities web-based administration.

What did you do?

- Summer Term 2006 - All teachers received updated training on "Making the Best Use of Classroom Assistants" and they were encouraged to share best practice across the school.

In 2006/07

- Two fewer classes were needed as the falling roll had affected both ' the Infant and Junior departments. This meant that we only needed to afford to

appoint two extra Teaching Assistants in order to fulfil our ambition of allocating a part-time Teaching Assistant to each class throughout the school.

- By working in close partnership with the class teacher, each Teaching Assistant was able to contribute more to planning, was able to give improved, strategic support to the children and the class teacher and also gained confidence and self esteem by gaining valuable skills and further experience.
- They were mainly used to support Literacy and Numeracy but were also given a management responsibility within their department, such as SEN resources, stock, display etc., which raised their profile within their department.
- One of the two new posts was a Higher Level Teaching Assistant who was appointed to act as Line Manager and Facilitator for Support Staff Development.
- This structure worked well as the HLTA could provide training for lunchtime staff and Teaching Assistants. We found that support staff were more likely to ask the HLT A about little queries or concerns that they might not have had a chance to share with a teacher or a member of the management staff.
- We invited all staff and paid them to attend an INSET day, the day before the Autumn Term started, with lunch provided. This helped to create a sense of the importance of the whole team to the success of the school. It also consolidated the team approach needed and provided an opportunity for all staff to discuss the school's priorities as defined in the School Development Plan so that they could all make their own contribution. All staff were thus trained on Child Protection and the school's Positive Behaviour Strategy.
- It was decided to have more regular meetings for support staff and HLT A staff were invited to attend Teaching staff meetings so that they were aware of any issues discussed and could update support staff.
- Provision at lunchtime was improved by using Teaching Assistants to fill vacancies for lunchtime Organisers. The HLT A also provided extra training for Welfare staff and supported them on the playground, suggesting games and idea. Extra playground games and resources were provided to support this initiative.
- By working in one class, with the same teacher, the teaching assistants were able to take a more active part in curriculum planning and activities. The children formed more positive relationships with support staff and gave them more respect and this extended to lunchtime staff as some of them were the same TAs. Classroom teaching assistants were able to take a more active and practical role in discouraging underachievement by getting to know the pupils better, checking that reading books were changed regularly and chasing up homework.
- Within a relatively short time the attitude of the children significantly improved and they showed more respect for teaching assistants and lunchtime staff. Intervention programmes were also working more effectively.

2007/08

- Once again ALL staff attended the INSET day before the start of the Autumn Term. Progress to date and the new School Development Plan were shared and all staff received joint Fire Safety Training together.

The Workforce Reform initiative was working well and the boosted confidence of classroom support staff enabled us to move on a stage further.

- We were able to extend the initiative to provide both quality PPA time for teachers and a more creative curriculum for children in smaller groups.
- Due to the school's financial constraints, we had been struggling to cover teaching staff for PPA time as we would like. We had employed a specialist teacher for French and HLTA staff to cover classes but had to resort to having two half-hour assemblies a week in each key-stage as well.
- Meanwhile, teachers, wanting to work collaboratively, were having curriculum planning meetings at the end of the school day when they were tired and an hour was not long really long enough to do the task properly.
- The Head Teacher consulted with Teaching and Support Staff which resulted in a change to the school timetable to provide the infrastructure which pushed the Workforce Reform initiative further forward. The result was "The Five Thursday Plan" - Thursday being the day when all Classroom Support Staff were employed.
- The teachers readily agreed to use a PPA afternoon for a Key Stage Planning Meeting for each phase - Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 which took place on three of the five Thursday afternoons.
- Two classes were covered by HLTA staff and two classes were split into half so that four groups of children were offered an enriched curriculum by T A support staff who set up tasks such as art, co-operative board games, sporting activities and computer work according to their interests and abilities. The children spent half an hour on each activity before moving on and completed all four tasks during the afternoon. The Head Teacher covered any staff absences and provided percussion workshops incorporating the use of African Drums. The other two Thursdays gave an opportunity for further training for Teaching Assistants on the new Literacy and Numeracy strategies, the use of practical resources to support the development of Maths concepts and they were also introduced to assessment procedures, particularly the use of PIPs information to show which children had underachieved during the previous year.
- These underachieving children were then targeted more effectively within the classroom by support assistants.
- Classroom Teaching Assistants also played a big part in ensuring that all children regularly changed their reading books, learnt their number bonds or x tables and completed their homework.
- They also ran successful intervention programmes such as Springboard and Quest with training provide by the HLTA.
- More of the administrative work related to the removal of the 24 tasks from teachers was shared by the Classroom Teaching Assistants, thus removing some of the undue pressure on School Office Staff.

2008/09

- In September 2008, two INSET days were utilised to incorporate both curriculum training and Paediatric First Aid Training.
- The group activities had worked so well with the Juniors that it was decided to

incorporate this strategy into the Infant timetable

- A Senior Leadership Team Meeting was incorporated into the Thursday afternoon cycle to help to improve work/home life balance and management efficiency and effectiveness.

Which members of the establishment and/or wider community have been involved and what was their role?

This initiative involved all members of staff:-

- Premises and Administration staff
- Lunchtime Supervisors
- Teachers
- Management Staff and Teaching Assistants
- Governors fully supported the initiative and provided the necessary finance.
- The Chair of Governors and another Governor attended Change Team Meetings
- Pupils were an essential element and communication with parents was improved and increased.

How has the practice been modified or improved during development?

The Thursday afternoon PPA/children's activities sessions were popular with both staff and children and helped us to further develop more creative curriculum and gave an opportunity to work in smaller groups. In 2008/09 the activity groups were extended to the infant children and an opportunity for a day-time planning meeting was extended to the Senior Leadership Team.

What has been the impact of the project on pupils' learning, achievement or enjoyment and how has this been measured?

- Teachers planning for creativity and enrichment of the curriculum has been improved
- Classroom Support Assistants are more confident. They make a more positive contribution and are suggesting and implementing more of their own ideas to encourage pupil progress.
- Pupil Voice evaluations show that children enjoy the enrichment activities provided by classroom Support Staff.
- Classroom observations show a more creative and skills-based curriculum with more positive contribution from pupils.
- PIPS grade frequencies show an upturn in progress. In most year groups the actual progress last year [Prior Value-added] was better than the anticipated progress [from the Contextual Data] i.e. fewer children are underachieving than anticipated by the PIPs information.

What are the next stages in the development process?

- Further training for support staff who are keen to pursue their career prospects.
- The development of the Learning Mentor.
- The extension of more enrichment activities during the lunchtime period and after-school.

What aspects of this practice may be useful for other establishments to consider?

The Thursday afternoon activities not only supported more effective planning agreed by teachers in their PPA time, but it also improved the relationship between pupils and support staff

The initiative boosted the morale of all staff and consolidated a team approach which incorporates pupils and parents.