



# Benhurst Primary School Policy Statement

*'Only my best is good enough for me'*



<b>Policy</b>	<b>Teaching Assistant &amp; Higher Level Teaching Assistant</b>
<b>Implementation Date</b>	<b>September 2016</b>
<b>Review Date</b>	<b>September 2019</b>

## Aims

Benhurst Primary School aims to provide quality teaching and learning for all its pupils, delivering a curriculum for the development of the whole child and one that is appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in a safe, secure, happy, caring and stimulating environment.

To make the most impact, a Teaching Assistant<sup>1</sup> must benefit the children in your class - not just the children with Special Educational Needs or the Most Able children but across the spectrum.

## Introduction

Teaching Assistants, when used appropriately, make a significant contribution to the work and success of Benhurst Primary School. They do this through their learning support for children as individuals as groups, and as classes; through their support for teachers in the preparation and delivery of their lessons; and through their support for the development of the curriculum. We offer training support to our Teaching Assistants to support learning and teaching.

## What is a Teaching Assistant?

The Teaching Assistant is one instrument in helping to ensure that Teachers focus their time and energy on learning and teaching.

Their role is to help raise standards in:

Supporting the pupils by:

- Establishing good relationships with them.
- Using a range of communication aids and systems - including signing when needed.
- Enabling individuals or groups to engage with the learning objectives of the lesson, and to work towards individual targets and learning plans.
- Responding to their needs, whilst encouraging independence and resilience.
- Promoting their self-esteem.
- Helping them with their personal needs, (such as supporting pupils with their toileting, washing or changing, or looking after them when they feel unwell).
- Helping them to access resources and to use equipment, as necessary.
- Promoting inclusion by helping to ensure that all pupils are able to fully access the curriculum.
- Ensuring their safety by employing specific behaviour management techniques in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and, where appropriate, individual children's Positive Handling Plans and 5P Intervention Plan.

<sup>1</sup> In this policy we use the term Teaching Assistant to refer to those members of staff who are not teachers, but who work with children in the classroom. This includes HLTAs, SNAs and TAs.

Supporting the teacher by:

- 'team teaching' with the Class Teacher, at planned times and under the direction of the teacher.
- Helping the teacher to model effective learning strategies.
- Occasionally making ongoing assessment notes during lessons.
- Preparing learning resources for a child or children with whom they work.
- Escorting groups of pupils to different work areas.
- Supervising pupils when they are learning or playing outside the classroom.

Supporting the curriculum by:

- Helping pupils understand instructions, through repetition, rephrasing and modelling.
- Undertaking individual or small-group support or interventions, including speech and language activities, Occupational Therapy programmes, Catch Up programmes, etc.
- Showing pupils how to use Computing Technology to develop their learning, e.g I pads
- Selecting, preparing and maintaining learning equipment and resources.

Supporting the school by:

- Helping to implement policies, such as those on Safeguarding, Child Protection, and Health and Safety.
- Participating in training, in order to keep up-to-date with current school issues.
- Contributing to discussions about assessment and pupils' progress.
- Assisting with the supervision of pupils outside lesson times, i.e. in the playground or in the school grounds generally.
- Consistently implementing the school's Behaviour Policy.

The effectiveness of a Teaching Assistant in class is largely dependent on the clarity of role, Communication and Team Management. The deployment of Teaching Assistants is primarily the responsibility of the Year Group Leader in consultation with Class Teachers in their year group. The SENCo in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team oversees the allocation of Teaching Assistants to year groups in line with pupil needs. Teaching Assistants are very resourceful and can always find a job in the classroom. At times initiative is needed by the teacher and at others by the Teaching Assistant. It is important that the teacher, Teaching Assistant partnership is based on trust, empathy, mutual respect for the children and each other with shared goals.

### **Types of Teaching Assistant**

Most Teaching Assistants will have some form of qualification specific to their job or be prepared to work towards this. There are different levels of achievement. For example a level 3 qualification (Diploma, NNEB, NVQ3, BTEC diploma) would mean that they are able to work in an unsupervised capacity to:

- Work with and be responsible for a child or group of children supporting their learning.
- Make observations of children.
- Assess and monitor children's progress.
- Prepare resources.
- Be responsible for resources.
- Develop activities to suit the needs of the children.
- Support children's reading, both as individuals and in groups.
- Liaise with parents.
- Liaise with the SENCo.
- Work collaboratively on IEPs.
- Monitor targets set on IEPs.
- Contribute to planning.

## Partnership between Teacher and Teaching Assistant

A large number of our Teaching Assistants are very experienced and may well have dealt with situations that are 'new' to the teacher. Teachers should draw on the experience of both teachers and Teaching Assistants when faced with situations that they have not experienced before.

An effective class team does not evolve overnight. For an effective team to develop there must be:

Mutual trust between teacher and Teaching Assistant. A good Teaching Assistant will be willing to learn from the teacher's teaching experience to improve their performance, and to maintain continuity in the class. A good teacher will also be willing to learn from their Teaching Assistant's experience to improve learning opportunities and provision for their pupils.

Continuity between Class Teacher and Teaching Assistant. For example, there needs to be a system of consistent expectations where both adults have the same rules and methods as this enhances stability, security and confidence within the group. It also reinforces expectations to the children. All members of staff are expected to follow the school's Behaviour Policy.

Time to communicate with each other. Communication is vital for an effective working relationship. Both Teacher and Teaching Assistant must be aware of information relevant to the pupils in their care. Teaching Assistants must have lesson plans shared with them in advance. They must know clearly what is expected of them and when. For each lesson they must know what their role is. They should also be given advance notice, where possible, of resources that they are required to collect for lessons, or for activities that they are asked to deliver. Teachers need to consider what they would like to know prior to the start of a lesson and ensure that their Teaching Assistant is apprised of the relevant information. At least once (ideally at the start of the day), both teacher and Teaching Assistant should briefly meet to discuss the day together. It is a good time to tweak jobs and ensure that the Teaching Assistant is fully utilised. In a team where good communication exists the teacher and the Teaching Assistant will bounce ideas off each other.

Shared plans. Teaching Assistants should have a copy of the finished weekly plans. Jobs should be highlighted so that the Teaching Assistant has time to collect resources and to speak to the teacher before being asked to lead an activity. Teachers should ensure that the Teaching Assistant is aware of the focus of the learning and of the intended outcomes.

An agreed daily routine.

An agreed communication method for sharing assessment information. For example, if the Teaching Assistant is taking a small group, how will they provide the teacher with important information about the group's progress.

An awareness of each other's needs, strengths and weaknesses.

Set clear goals for yourselves and the children. At all times put the children first, they need respect too.

Teaching Assistants are employed to work in the school, rather than to work in a specific class, year group or post. Teaching Assistants are employed on the same contract and general job description and could, after consultation, be asked to change class, year group and/or role in line with the needs of the school. Within this remit, suitably trained and/or experienced Teaching Assistants can be allocated to specific posts which require them to work across a Key Stage rather than be allocated to a designated class or year group. All Teaching Assistants may from time to time be asked to cover in a different class or year group, for example to cover the absence of the regular Teaching Assistant or to assist a class going on a school trip.

Teaching Assistants may be directed to support children with complex special needs - including medical, sensory and/or physical difficulties - in order to enable them to fully access appropriate learning activities.

## **HLTA**

The school employs Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) to provide some PPA cover for teachers across the school. HLTAs are also used, where appropriate, to cover Class Teacher absence, for example when a Class Teacher attends a course or is absent due to short term illness. HLTAs are asked to cover classes in year groups where their experience and expertise is best suited.

Under exceptional circumstances, Teaching Assistants<sup>2</sup> may be asked to provide short term cover for a class in the absence of a teacher. Teaching Assistants would be paid at spinal point 22 (HLTA rate) for the time that they cover the class. (This is currently £11.75 per hour.) In the event that the school is unable to secure a teacher to cover a class, the school may ask a Teaching Assistant to cover a class in the absence of the teacher. In addition, the school may on occasion ask a Teaching Assistant to cover a class for a short period of time so that a Teacher can attend an important meeting during school time for example. The school would only ask a Teaching Assistant to cover a class if they have completed the back page to this policy indicating that they are happy to provide this cover, and if they have suitable experience.

## **Special Needs Assistants**

The school employs Special Needs Assistants to regularly work with children who have specific significant needs.

Through the employment of Teaching Assistants in our school we aim to:

- Realise the significant contribution that support staff can make in increasing the school's effectiveness.
- Maximise children's progress in learning by providing support for teachers in carrying out their role.
- Support differentiated learning by offering 1:1 sessions, enabling additional small group tuition, and when appropriate, delivering a specific activity to the whole class.
- Improve curriculum access for any pupil who might need additional support.
- Provide support for teachers in performing a wide variety of other tasks - for example, playground supervision etc.
- Make full use of all the skills and expertise that our Teaching Assistants have to offer.

## **Management of Teaching Assistants**

The line manager for all Teaching Assistants, HLTAs and SNAs in our school is the SENCo in the first instance. The SENCo and HLTAs are responsible for carrying out the Performance Management of all Teaching Assistants.

Day to day support in the classroom will be directed by the Class Teacher.

Teaching Assistants will have access to appropriate planning and records maintained by the teacher.

## **Professional Development of Teaching Assistants**

We value and support the professional development of all of our staff, and recognise that this is vital in ensuring effective learning and teaching. Our Teaching Assistants bring a variety of skills and areas of expertise to their role in our school.

- Teaching Assistants are entitled to professional development, and will receive specific training, as well as the general training provided by the school. Access to this training will be considered in relation to priorities in the school improvement plan. Training will be provided during normal paid working hours.
- Provided they meet certain criteria, the school will encourage Teaching Assistants to take part in formally accredited training. Provided the course fits the requirements of the school, all costs will be met from the school budget.

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<sup>2</sup> For this section the term Teaching Assistant refers to members of school staff employed as Teaching Assistants and not those employed as SNAs or HLTAs.

- Teaching Assistants take part in a performance management review with either the SENCo or one of the HLTAs.

### **Examples of the effective use of Teaching Assistants**

Whilst the teacher is taking the class, the Teaching Assistant could be used to support a pre-determined target group, keep identified children on task, modify inappropriate behaviour and promote appropriate behaviour, encourage reluctant children to respond to questioning with confidence, conduct observations of target children, record assessment information, record responses from a target group of pupils, work with an identified group of children to deliver the same lesson, etc.

There are times when it may be beneficial for the Teaching Assistant to cover the whole class to provide the Class Teacher with time to observe children that the Teaching Assistant, other adult or teacher has raised concerns about, or to conduct class observations and assessment. Class Teachers should ask whether or not the Teaching Assistant with whom they are working is willing to take the whole class.

Teaching Assistants should work with a variety of pupils. It is not a good idea for the Teaching Assistant to work with the same target group of pupils for every lesson. Teaching Assistants may have a wealth of knowledge about special educational needs, however, it is important that the teacher also knows about the ability and progression of these children as they are ultimately responsible and accountable for their progress.

To Head Teacher

I **would like** to be considered to provide short term cover for a class in the absence of the Class Teacher. I am normally paid as a Teaching Assistant and understand that when I cover a class that I will be paid at spinal point 22 (HLTA rate) for the duration of time that I cover.

I **would not like** to be asked to provide short term cover for a class in the absence of the Class Teacher.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

This agreement will remain in place unless the school is notified in writing of any change.