



## PPA time – all change!

Preparation, planning and assessment time (PPA) has to be in place for all teachers by September 2005. On average, each teacher will have two hours of PPA time per week.

Schools will have to: appoint other teachers to cover their classes; be creative in employing artists, dancers and sports coaches; and use teaching assistants in different ways.

Many teaching assistants will see significant changes to their roles. As you become involved in these

considerable changes, make sure that you are aware of the following:

- You will need to have the necessary skills – you should not be asked to do anything outside your capabilities.
- You should be covered under the school's public liability policy to do new jobs allocated to you.



- You should have training for new roles and be encouraged to develop your skills.
- If you have HLTA status, you should expect to work with less supervision and in more specialised roles, such as ICT.

The school and teachers will be working hard to make PPA a success, but be prepared for a few initial teething problems. It will not be easy to implement, and it is likely that some of the problems won't have been anticipated.

## HLTAs – use your skills

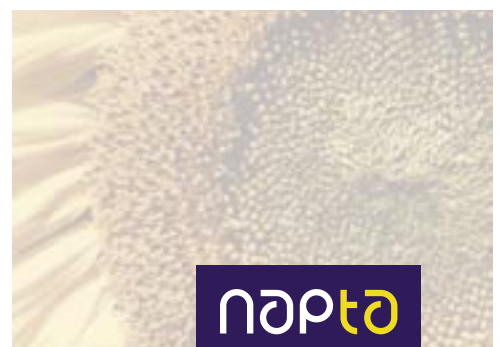
As a Higher Level Teaching Assistant, you have a national qualification that tells everyone in your school that you can demonstrate agreed national professional standards. If you have, or are training towards, this qualification, you need to ensure that you are putting your skills to use. It is vital that the effort you have put into taking this career step does not go to waste.

Supporting and developing learning is at the core of your training – and should be at the core of your work.

You should expect to work in the following roles:

- supporting pupils
- supporting teachers
- supporting the curriculum
- supporting the school
- managing others where this is appropriate.

Schools and individuals must do their utmost to ensure that no one with HLTA status wastes their skills and talents working solely on administrative tasks – their skills lie with people.



# Behaviour management

Teachers must be in control for teaching and learning to take place effectively. In the first of a series of articles looking at behaviour management strategies, we consider your role in supporting teachers with managing pupil behaviour. Unfortunately, there is no single technique that will work every time for every pupil. However, there are strategies that will work with most pupils most of the time; and the wider your repertoire of strategies to choose from, the fewer situations you will be unable to deal with.

Being 'visually vigilant' is key to behaviour management:

- **Know what is happening**  
When you are working with a small or large group, there should be no 'dark corners', metaphorically speaking, where pupils can misbehave. Make sure you can see all your pupils all, or most, of the time, and that they know you can see them. Good eye contact is essential. Similarly, using your face, eg smiling or frowning, will give clear signals about whether you approve of their behaviour.

- **Manage your space**  
This builds on the idea of eliminating 'dark corners'. It is difficult to pick up precisely what is happening on the edge of your field of vision. Therefore it is important to be in a position where you can see most things, and then to move around regularly to pick up everything else. It is a mistake to stay in the same place for very long if you can't see all your pupils.

Being 'visually vigilant' allows you to do the following:

- **Look ahead**  
It is possible, when you know a group of pupils, to anticipate what they are likely to do in a given set of circumstances, and pre-empt problems. This could mean the difference between quietly speaking to a pupil before they disrupt the class and having to resolve a major disruptive incident.
- **Comment to an individual**  
Speaking out loud to a pupil has two important functions: it tells the pupil that you are aware of what they are doing, and signals to the rest of the class that they are being monitored.

- **Check work in progress**  
When you observe the class as a whole, followed by moving around the classroom, you will see who is working and who is not. If pupils are finding the work too easy or too difficult, you can take appropriate action before they become bored and disruptive.
- **Stop and start**  
For those pupils who have difficulty concentrating, it will be useful to stop and repeat instructions regularly.
- **Make constant reminders**  
All pupils need reminding that you, as an adult, are in charge, and that you notice everything that happens in the classroom. It is important to stop bad behaviour, but equally important to reinforce good behaviour with praise and reminders about good manners, being polite, taking turns, etc.



## Working with SEN pupils

Some of your most important work is bound to be supporting pupils with SEN. You should make sure you are familiar with the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* (DfES, 2001), which sets out the procedure involved in identifying SEN. The stages below help to represent your input in this process:

### Stage 1

A teacher or teaching assistant expresses concern about a particular pupil, recognising that they are having problems with the differentiated work being set.

The usual procedure here is:

- Teacher and teaching assistant discuss the pupil's needs.
- They discuss the pupil with the SEN Coordinator (SENCO).
- There are discussions with the pupil's parents where possible.
- Evidence is collected about the pupil's achievements over an agreed period of time.
- Close attention is paid to how the pupil is learning in the classroom.
- The pupil is supported and monitored by a teaching assistant.
- The pupil is put on the school's SEN register.

Essentially, broad concerns are raised and attempts are made to meet the pupil's needs through classroom support.

### Stage 2

If all the information collected about the pupil recognises significant difficulties, the SENCO takes overall control of the pupil's needs. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is written after consultation with teachers and teaching assistants. This becomes the working document that states the pupil's difficulties, records the actions to be taken and comments on successful and less successful actions.

### Stage 3

After discussions with parents, teachers, teaching assistants and the pupil, the SENCO decides whether the pupil needs specific support from an outside agency.

The range of possible services includes:

- school nurse (their title may be different in your local authority)
- speech therapists
- social workers
- educational psychologists
- health visitors
- SEN advisory teams
- behaviour support teams
- support teams for specific disabilities such as autism, visual problems, hearing difficulties, etc.

Much of this support will only be available for a certain number of hours each week, so you and the teachers need to be able to follow up the support agencies' work during the rest of the week.

### Stages 4 and 5

The complex nature of the pupil's needs means that they require a Statement of Special Educational Needs. This is a legally binding document that describes the precise nature of the pupil's problems and how they are to be met. The SENCO needs to collect and collate a lot of evidence. You will need to be part of this process, and the precise support put in place will usually involve your significant daily input.

Teaching assistants who support statemented pupils will often be required to:

- assist in ongoing accounts of the pupil's learning difficulties for their IEP and annual statement review
- take part in regular meetings to help assess the most effective support
- identify learning and behaviour targets, including timescales for achieving them
- take part in assessing and monitoring progress
- take part in IEP and statement reviews and other meetings with parents.

# Getting to grips with the HLTA professional standards

Common standards are always a useful tool for measuring performance. They not only let you see whether you do certain things effectively, but they help you recognise any areas where you need more training.

Teaching assistants have local standards in terms of what schools and local authorities expect; however, we will focus here upon the Professional Standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants.

Here, we look at the first section of the professional standards, **Professional values and practice**. Even if you are not aiming to reach this level, it is likely that you will feel the need to master most of the requirements in this section.

To meet the HLTA standards, individuals must demonstrate **all** of the following:

- 1 They have high expectations of all pupils; respect their social, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds; and are committed to raising their educational achievement.
- 2 They build and maintain successful relationships with pupils, treat them consistently, with respect and consideration, and are concerned for their development as learners.
- 3 They demonstrate and promote the positive values, attitudes and behaviour they expect from the pupils with whom they work.

- 4 They work collaboratively with colleagues, and carry out their roles effectively, knowing when to seek help and advice.
- 5 They are able to liaise sensitively and effectively with parents and carers, recognising their roles in pupils' learning.
- 6 They are able to improve their own practice, through observation, evaluation and discussion with colleagues.

**Is your professional self described here?**



The next **NAPTA News** will include:

- current news and updates
- a look at specific types of SEN
- more advice on behaviour and classroom management
- more on measuring up to HLTA standards.

If you have any suggestions for future topics or questions, please email [info@napta.org.uk](mailto:info@napta.org.uk).

