

## Welcome back

This is a special edition of *NAPTA News* for the new school year, in which we take a look at the exciting new benefits coming up for NAPTA members and their schools.

### Building your own CPD portfolio

School support staff have a remarkably diverse range of backgrounds and skills, and each person brings their own unique experience and abilities to their role. An ideal way of gaining a fuller understanding of what you bring to your job, and working out the best route for further continuing professional development (CPD), is to create a CPD portfolio.

A CPD portfolio is a set of documents that outline your job role and responsibilities, experience, qualifications, skills, interests and aspirations. The portfolio is a useful written record for personal reference, and it can be added to and developed over time to show improvement. It provides excellent evidence of your abilities, and demonstrates a willingness to self-evaluate and develop professionally.

A new tool available from NAPTA, *CPD Portfolio Builder*, gives you all the support you need to create a comprehensive CPD portfolio, enabling portfolios to be written either independently or as part of INSET.

The process of making a CPD portfolio helps you to:

- reflect on your job role and aspirations
- show your value as a member of the organisation
- highlight your strengths and weaknesses and seek support where required
- benefit from appropriate professional development
- respond positively to change
- learn new things
- enhance your career prospects.

The CPD portfolio also helps make managers more aware of your skills and needs, and enables you to discuss your aspirations and unused strengths with them. This can help you to improve your existing role through training, taking on more responsibility or focusing on the aspects of your job that you do best.

*Improve your existing role through CPD*

### Repeating your self-evaluation

Successful professional development requires a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement.

For many NAPTA members, nearly a year has passed since they first underwent self-evaluation. The findings of your first report should have helped you to understand your strengths and the issues you find most challenging, and to take positive steps to gain confidence and improve the way you work. A lot can change in a year. One year on, it is important to consider these changes and what more can be done.

On an individual level, you may find it helpful to look back over your last NAPTA report. Ask yourself what were the main sources of concern then and how you and the school have responded to the report's findings. Is there anything that still needs work? Has your role changed at all? Are there new concerns? This can be a useful way to collect your thoughts about where you stand, what progress you have made and what you should do next. It can also be useful to discuss these issues with your line manager and so feed into more formal systems of review.

To give a more detailed picture of what has changed, both individually and throughout

the school, and to provide new impetus for further development, NAPTA has improved its survey tools, the *Professional Development Review* and the *Support Staff Survey*.



### Marking guide for TAs

Assessment and marking are important ways for teaching assistants to support learning, and offer an opportunity to make a real difference to pupils. As part of their growing package of support for member schools, NAPTA has developed a guide specifically aimed at teaching assistants with helpful tips for ensuring that assessment is as effective as possible for individual pupils and the whole school.

For more information on all of these new resources, see [www.napta.org.uk](http://www.napta.org.uk).

### Helping pupils feel safe

Children's safety has always been a top priority for everyone who works in schools. It continues to be an important national issue because of Government initiatives, including Every Child Matters. However, even with rigorous protection procedures and policies, it can be difficult to identify and tackle the issues that worry pupils the most. With such sensitive issues, children and young people can find it difficult to share their concerns and so problems with bullying, child protection and health and safety can be overlooked. With this in mind, NAPTA is offering a new tool called *Feeling Safe* to all member schools. *Feeling Safe* helps you to gather pupils' perceptions with sensitivity and produces a report highlighting the hidden issues within the school.



### Sunflower competition

The start of a new school term has signalled the end of summer, and with it comes the end of the first leg of the **NAPTA Sunflower Project**. NAPTA is offering a gardening and outdoor activity kit for the class that has grown the tallest sunflower, and a pack of science resources for their school. There is still time to enter the competition – to do so, simply send a photo of your tallest sunflower with a metre ruler next to it to [sunflowers@napta.org.uk](mailto:sunflowers@napta.org.uk) or Sunflower Project Competition, NAPTA, PO Box 210, Cambridge, CB4 3ZW.