

Castilion Primary School



Teaching Assistants: an evidence based guide to excellent practice

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The essence of the successful deployment of TAs lies in understanding the nature of the support that they can provide. This can be divided into four strands:

- support for the pupil.
- support for the teacher.
- support for the curriculum.
- support for the school.

These four forms of support provided by the TA are not separate but interdependent, and at any time a TA may well be involved in an activity in which two or more forms of support are being given.

The role of the Teaching Assistant is very important. The effective employment of a TA can make the difference between a child succeeding or failing. Much of the Teaching Assistant's role is directed by teacher, but an outstanding TA is also intuitive and responds to the needs of the children.

It is important that both teacher and Teaching Assistant work together with the aim that all of the children in the class are learning throughout the lesson. Children should make progress through suitably challenging activities and questioning. Thinking time is good; down time is not.

OFSTED

“Do teachers make effective use of teaching assistants and other support?”

With the increasing role of the Teaching Assistant in the classroom there has been a marked change in expectations. The most successful Teaching Assistant's are those who not only show characteristics of good teachers, but those who work closely as part of a team, enabling them to perform different roles within the team effectively, e.g. either effective support or confidence in leading the lesson or session.

Ofsted will be assessing the effect they have on learning. When in a support role, they will be assessed on how their group/individual/ whole class respond and benefit, from the input the Teaching Assistant has given. When leading a session, assessment will be on their success in achieving the learning objectives.

They will also be looking at how well you know the skills of your Teaching Assistant, and that they are used effectively. That they are well briefed and are aware of the learning outcomes for that session, having been involved in the planning.

A Guide to the Effective use of Teaching Assistants

Teacher	Teaching Assistant
Before the lesson	
<p>Tell your Teaching Assistant what the lesson is about and what you expect them to do.</p> <p>Give them a lesson plan.</p> <p>Have they got suitable resources?</p>	<p>Make sure you know what the lesson is going to be about.</p> <p>Be clear about what you will be expected to do during the lesson.</p> <p>Do you need any resources?</p>
During a lesson introduction	
<p>Is there a group who don't need this introduction – could the TA take a group straight away and get them going sooner?</p>	<p>Introduce the learning objective and success criteria (what are they learning and what do they need to do?)</p> <p>Check they know how to get on.</p> <p>Get them going quickly.</p>
During 'whole class' or 'carpet' time	
<p>Know where you want the Teaching Assistant to be.</p> <p>Place children who might need support so that the Teaching Assistant can get to them easily.</p> <p>Don't expect a TA to keep children focussed when the time is too long or the activity is inappropriate.</p>	<p>Concentrate on the children, not the teacher. You already know what the lesson is about!</p> <p>Sit next to the child or children who find it hard to listen or concentrate.</p> <p>Focus children, don't distract them.</p> <p>Model the behaviour you expect from the children.</p>
Working with a child or small group	
<p>Make sure the TA knows where to work with the child or group and what resources they will need.</p> <p>Ensure that the TA knows why they are working with a child or group and what support to give.</p>	<p>Know where you will be working with the child or group and what resources you will need.</p> <p>Know why you are working with the child or group – What support are you giving and why?</p>
Helping children with their work	
<p>Communicate the learning objective with the TA (this is not the same as completing the task!)</p> <p>Communicate the success criteria with the TA – what will show that the children have learned something?</p> <p>Make sure the TA knows that learning takes precedence over completion of task.</p> <p>Have 'next steps' for learning available to the TA – they might need them.</p>	<p>Ask questions to check the child understands.</p> <p>Encourage the children to answer rather than answering for them.</p> <p>Make sure the child does the work, rather than you.</p> <p>Don't worry about the child finishing the task – it is more important that they understand the bit they have done.</p> <p>Ask questions to move children on. Go onto next steps if learning is secure.</p>
During plenaries or a summing up	
<p>Is there a group whose needs are different - could the TA give a differentiated level of plenary to a group?</p>	<p>Let the children tell you what they have learned or the problems they encountered.</p> <p>Use difficulties or misunderstandings as an opportunity to learn even more.</p> <p>Introduce next steps for learning.</p>

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Characteristics of Effective Practice		
Characteristics of effective Teaching Assistants		Characteristics of effective Pupils
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with the teacher on learning objectives. Fully understands the learning objective and how it fits to previous learning. Prepare and make available relevant resources, including ICT, matched to individual/group needs. Are aware of any learning targets of pupils. <p>This is OUTSTANDING when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been thorough liaison before the session between the teacher and the TA/CA about the learning and the task. The TA/CA has been involved in, and discussed, the planning. Expected outcomes, tasks and support for targeted pupils are clearly indicated in planning. The TA/CA has very good understanding of the learning objectives for the targeted pupils. The TA/CA is fully aware of any specific learning or other targets for the targeted pupils and understands how the task may support them. Appropriate resources reflecting the learning objectives and the needs of the targeted pupils have been identified, prepared and are made available at the right time. 	<p>ORGANISATION AND RESOURCES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know their individual learning targets Make use of appropriate resources, including ICT, to support their learning. <p>This is OUTSTANDING when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils know their learning, or other, targets and can see how the task may help them make progress in achieving them. Pupils make very effective use of all resources made available for the task to aid their learning. Pupils are able to access and use ICT effectively where provided and appropriate.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure pupils understand the learning objective and how it fits to previous learning. Ensure pupils are clear about the learning task. Demonstrate subject knowledge by using, explaining and modelling. Have high expectations of achievement. Use appropriate strategies when pupils encounter difficulties, not just giving answers. Use questioning, discussion and prompts to secure and develop understanding and skills. Use appropriate resources to support learning. Check on what pupils have learned during the session. <p>This is OUTSTANDING when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TA/CA carefully explains what learning is to take place and ensures that pupils understand the learning objective. The TA/CA ensures that pupils are clear about the task, how it should be completed and the time they have. The TA/CA demonstrates secure subject knowledge by using, explaining and modelling appropriate vocabulary. The TA/CA sets high expectations, and regularly reminds pupils about them. A wide variety of questioning techniques are effectively used to check and extend understanding and vocabulary. There are appropriate and timely opportunities for speaking and listening. Tasks are modelled well if necessary. Timely and appropriate Interventions are made so that pupils are effectively supported in their learning but not 'over supported' and given answers. Independence is developed very well. Resources such as ICT are very effectively used by the TA/CA to support learning. TA/CA checks that pupils can explain what they have done and have learned during the session. 	<p>SUPPORTING THE LEARNING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are clear about what they are learning and how it fits to previous work. Are clear about what is expected of them in terms of learning and outcome. Respond positively to high expectations, have high expectations of themselves. Show perseverance and stay on task when faced with challenge. Recognise when to ask for support. Extend skills, deepen their knowledge and understanding through the task, participation and responding to questions. Can explain what they have learned/can do as a result of the task. <p>This is OUTSTANDING when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils know what they are expected to learn and why. Pupils are clear about what they should have achieved by the end of the task. Pupils are very keen to do their best. Pupils try hard even when they are finding the task difficult. Pupils know when to ask for help, but don't do so unnecessarily. Pupils think hard in response to questions or ask questions which will help them carry on with the task. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem is developed very well, supporting their ability to work independently. Pupils can explain what they know or can do now (they couldn't before).
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow agreed class or school processes for managing challenging behaviour. Ensure pupils demonstrate positive behaviour throughout the learning task. Use positive language, encouragement and specific praise to support progress. Continue to promote confidence and motivate pupils by recognising and celebrating success. Ensure safety at all times and in all learning situations. <p>This is OUTSTANDING when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TA/CA has very high expectations of behaviour at all times from all pupils. All pupils are treated fairly and consistently at all time, being firmly but sensitively reminded about how they are expected to behave if necessary. Links between good behaviour and good learning are often made. Hard work and achievement are constantly noticed and rewarded by praise. Any successes by individuals are quickly celebrated in order to build confidence. All pupils are continually motivated by appropriate encouragement. Relationships are very positive with all pupils being shown respect at all times. Safety and the importance of safe practices are given high priority at all times. 	<p>BEHAVIOUR AND SAFETY AND MOTIVATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to rules and any reminders about behaviour. Settle quickly and are “ready to learn.” Allow others to learn and the session to proceed without interruption. Demonstrate positive and enthusiastic attitudes to learning and enjoy making progress. Collaborate and cooperate when required in lessons. Understand safety rules and contribute to a safe, positive learning environment. <p>This is OUTSTANDING when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils know the classroom and school rules and follow them well at all times. Pupils respond well to any reminders they are given about expectations of behaviour. Pupils listen well and always respond very positively to questions or instructions. Pupils show respect for the TA/CA and for each other by how they treat them, respond to them and cooperate with them. Pupils show a very positive attitude towards learning during all parts of the session. Pupils pay attention to safety rules and always behave in a safe way in the session.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that pupils are aware of their individual learning targets. Continually check understanding and provide support where necessary. Assess progress during the session and give clear guidance on the next steps pupils need to take. Reshape the task if necessary to secure learning. Record and feed back to teacher on progress of pupils. Mark work where appropriate. <p>This is OUTSTANDING when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TA/CA ensures they know what pupils' current, subject specific, individual learning targets are. Ensures that all pupils are really clear about their own subject learning targets and how the task relates. Continually checks understanding, assesses progress and provides targeted support where needed. Any feedback is closely related to the learning objective and to the achievement of learning targets. Gives clear guidance to individuals on where they currently are and the next steps they need to take to make progress. Quickly reshapes the task if necessary to secure learning. Records progress and feeds back to teacher, including objective achieved and any specific errors or misconceptions. Any marking is of high quality, with a clear view of how pupils have done and giving 'next step' comments if possible/appropriate. 	<p>ASSESSMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know what they are working to improve. Listen to feedback and respond appropriately. Know what they have learned in the session. Know whether they have made progress against their learning targets. Know what they need to do next to make further progress. <p>This is OUTSTANDING when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils know exactly what their subject specific learning targets are and what they need to do to meet them. Pupils know how and why the task will help them in meeting their learning target. Pupils listen well to any feedback given in the session and use it to carry on with the task more effectively. Pupils are able to assess whether they have made progress against the learning objective and/or their learning targets during the session. Pupils know what they need to do next in order to make further progress.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach reading, writing and communication skills and mathematics effectively. Develop knowledge, skills and understanding to ensure pupils make progress from their starting points. Know what progress pupils should be making given their starting point, current level of achievement and any specific need. <p>This is OUTSTANDING when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops pupils' specific literacy skills very well, showing high levels of competence and confidence. Ensures literacy skills are always applied where appropriate. Develops pupils' specific numeracy skills very well showing high levels of competence and confidence. Ensures numeracy skills are always applied where appropriate. Consistently gives timely support and challenge to ensure pupils make excellent progress in knowledge and understanding from their starting points. Consistently gives timely support and challenge to ensure pupils make excellent progress in skills from their starting points. 	<p>ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make progress given their current learning target(s) and any specific need. Develop reading, writing and mathematics skills and are able to apply their learning. <p>This is OUTSTANDING when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils make excellent progress against their learning target(s). Pupils make excellent progress in specific literacy skills taking into account their starting point, ability or any special need or circumstance. Pupils make excellent progress in being able to apply literacy skills to the learning task where appropriate. Pupils make excellent progress in specific numeracy skills taking into account their starting point, ability or any special need or circumstance. Pupils make excellent progress in being able to apply numeracy skills to the learning task where appropriate.
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CHECKLIST – SELF ASSESSMENT FOR TEACHING/CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

Area Do I.....?	Judgement (1-4)	What do I need to develop? Action needed
Liaise with the teacher on learning objectives		
Fully understand the learning objective and how it fits to previous learning		
Prepare and make available relevant resources, including ICT, matched to individual/group needs.		
Make myself aware of any learning targets of pupils.		
Ensure pupils understand the learning objective and how it fits to previous learning.		
Ensure pupils are clear about the learning task - what to do, time to do it.		
Demonstrate my subject knowledge by using, explaining and modelling.		
Have high expectations of achievement.		
Use appropriate strategies when pupils encounter difficulties, not just giving answers.		
Use questioning, discussion and prompts to secure and develop understanding and skills.		
Use appropriate resources to support learning.		
Check on what pupils have learned during the session.		
Follow agreed class or school processes for managing challenging behaviour.		
Ensure pupils demonstrate positive behaviour throughout the learning task.		
Use positive language, encouragement and specific praise to support progress.		
Continue to promote confidence and motivate pupils by recognising and celebrating success		
Ensure safety at all times and in all learning situations.		
Ensure that pupils are aware of their individual learning targets.		
Continually check understanding and provide support where necessary.		
Assess progress during the session and give clear guidance on the next steps pupils need to take.		
Reshape the task if necessary to secure learning.		
Record and feed back to teacher on progress of pupils, including objective achieved and any specific errors or misconceptions.		
Record and feed back to teacher on progress of pupils, including objective achieved and any specific errors or misconceptions.		
Mark work where appropriate.		
Teach reading, writing and communication skills and mathematics effectively.		
Develop knowledge, skills and understanding to ensure pupils make progress from their starting points.		
Know what progress pupils should be making given their starting point, current level of achievement and any specific need.		
Overall Comments:		

