

Evaluation of Mencap's Inspired Educators Project

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Executive Summary

Background

Mencap's Inspired Educators project took place within the context of nationally expressed concerns (eg Ofsted 2004, 2010, Blatchford et al 2009) regarding the deployment of Teaching Assistants (TA) to support children with SEN and disabilities. Questions had been raised regarding the effectiveness of methods of deployment employed in some schools and the degree of impact on pupil learning.

The project aimed to deliver expert advice, information and training to support schools in maximising the impact of Teaching Assistants (TA). In the academic year September 2013 to July 2014 Mencap sought to support over 1,500 education professionals across England through the project.

In partnership with the research team behind the Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS) project, Mencap developed and delivered nine seminars in six different regions in England. These sessions exposed head teachers, other school leaders and SENCOs to the findings from the research and explored strategies intended to maximise the effectiveness of TAs in their schools.

In order to deliver training directly to schools, a number of colleagues from six Teaching Schools were trained by the Mencap team as trainers. During the academic year 2013-14 the trainers delivered INSET for schools using a variety of delivery models.

Canterbury Christ Church University was commissioned by Mencap to provide an external evaluation of the project.

Methods

The evaluation of the Inspired Educators project was based on three distinct stages. The first stage involved the collection of data using questionnaires prior to and directly after the head teacher and SENCO seminars and training events provided for teachers by the local Teaching School. The aim of the questionnaires was to provide a perspective on the immediate impact of the Inspired Educators project in terms of, for example, changes in views on existing practice and intentions to take action in school based on the input received. Data was also gathered that indicated how well received the different events were that took place as part of the project.

The head teacher and SENCO pre seminar questionnaire¹ was completed by 277 respondents and the post seminar questionnaire by 267 respondents. Based on data received from Mencap indicating that approximately 300 heads and SENCOs were registered to attend the training, these figures represent response rates of approximately 92% and 89% respectively.

¹ Within the report the phrase *head teacher and SENCO questionnaire* is used but it should be recognised that not all of those attending the seminars were head teachers or SENCOs.

The teacher pre INSET questionnaire was completed by 788 respondents, which is estimated to be approximately 66% of those who attended the training. The post INSET questionnaire was completed by 598 respondents.

The second stage of the evaluation involved the distribution via email of a follow up questionnaire three months after a school's last contact with the Teaching School trainers. This was sent to the head teacher, SENCO and teachers to gauge the short to medium term impact of involvement in the project. Where a school had only been represented at the head teacher and SENCO seminar the attendee(s) was sent an email containing the link to their questionnaire and a link to the teacher questionnaire for them to distribute. The three month follow up questionnaire for teachers had been designed so that it could still be completed by teachers who had not directly accessed training from the Teaching Schools, with certain questions by-passed.

Only 47 responses to the head teacher and SENCO three month follow up questionnaire were received. Of the 47 who returned the third head teacher and SENCO questionnaire only 21 had completed all three questionnaires. The teacher three month follow up questionnaire was severely hampered by the practical difficulty that many of the Teaching Schools did not collect and supply email addresses for teachers attending the INSET. Only 19 teachers completed the three month follow up questionnaire. Of these 12 had completed all three questionnaires.

Though this stage of the evaluation did not draw the number of response hoped to allow the intended comparison with previous data collected, considered in conjunction with the case study data gathered at Stage 3, it provides a guide to the potential for change offered by the Inspired Educators project.

The third stage of the evaluation was based on case study visits to 11 schools. The small number of schools volunteering to take part meant that the process was largely one of self-selection rather than based on any selection criteria. During each case study visit the following staff were interviewed where possible:

- Head and/or other senior leader who attended the seminar.
- Interview with the SENCO (whether or not they attended the seminar).
- Group interview with 2 – 4 teachers (selected by school).
- Group interview with 2 – 4 TAs (selected by school).

The interviews were semi-structured, based on a set of questions related to three key themes:

- How behaviour/practice has changed as a result of the project.
- Practical approaches/ best-practice resources.
- Attitudinal and cultural change/support for inclusive education goals more widely.

Due to the limited data available through the three month follow up questionnaires, the rich data gathered through the case study stage of the evaluation is considered

to be the better guide on the potential for change. This data provides an indication of what schools can achieve through engagement with the Inspired Educators project.

Chapter 1: Training for the training providers

In order to deliver training directly to schools, a number of colleagues from six Teaching Schools were trained by the Mencap team as trainers. The data gathered would suggest that this training for the trainers achieved its aims. Views expressed were broadly positive regarding the content of the training received and there was an acceptance of the need for this INSET in schools. The trainers were able to identify clear benefits both for institutions and in terms of improved outcomes for children. Some trainers' responses acknowledged the possibility that, though the training was valuable and needed by schools, this did not necessarily equate to schools recognising this need or being receptive to some of the messages from the research on TA deployment.

There were some reservations from some of the trainers regarding what they perceived to be too much didactic delivery and not enough variety and interaction within the training they received. A related issue was the suggestion that in delivering the INSET in schools there would be a need to enhance it to ensure it was relevant in terms of being both up to date and applicable in context of the geographical area where it was being delivered. As one particular trainer noted, any enhancements to the INSET would still need to retain the key messages and maintain the focus on the intended outcomes of the Inspired Educators project.

The teaching experience of those trained as trainers is likely to be a factor in achieving credibility in those schools receiving the INSET. Most of the trainers had many years' experience. It should be recognised however that, whilst this credibility associated with being a practitioner is important, it does not necessarily equate with being an effective trainer. Most of the trainers had experience of delivering training to colleagues within their own schools but fewer had delivered training beyond this. Responses suggested that individuals had varying degrees of confidence in aspects of their role as trainers as part of the Inspired Educators project and this may, in part, reflect their own individual starting points in terms of their experience in a trainer role. An area for consideration might be whether there is additional input that would be beneficial in relation to being a trainer for those with less experience or confidence in this area.

The training provided for trainers appears to have been successful in developing the trainers' knowledge and understanding of the aims and objectives of the INSET they would be delivering, Mencap's reasons for developing the project and the research behind Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA).

Chapter 2: Head teacher and SENCO seminars

In partnership with the research team behind the Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS) Project, Mencap developed and delivered area based seminars that exposed head teachers, other school leaders and SENCOs to the findings from the research and explored strategies intended to maximise the effectiveness of TAs in their schools.

In terms of the intention to attract senior staff with strategic responsibilities who could take forward developments in school, the seminars were successful. Viewed in terms of the specific intent to attract heads and SENCOs the proportion of head teachers (25.5%) was perhaps lower than might have been anticipated. SENCOs were well represented with around half indicating that they were in this role. A salient point is that in a large secondary school the head teacher or principal may not have a role in relation to the preparedness and effective deployment of TAs beyond the general level of overall accountability for the quality of practice in school and associated outcomes for all pupils.

By far the most popular reason for attending the seminar was a desire to improve the effective use of TAs. This is not necessarily an indication that practice was felt to be underdeveloped or weak. However it is interesting to note that prior to the seminar only 4.7% viewed their current practice as outstanding and 53.1% considered it to be 'good'. This dropped to 3.4% 'outstanding' and 49.1% 'good' in the post seminar questionnaire. The fact that among a group of senior leaders 39.4% did not feel able to rate their school's practice as 'good' or outstanding' reveals a need for the work of the Inspired Educators project. The increase from 13.4% in the pre seminar questionnaire to 37.5% in the post seminar questionnaire of respondents indicating their practice was in need of improvement would seem to illustrate the role of the seminar in increasing awareness of what represents effective practice. Despite possible doubts regarding the quality of the schools' practice in relation to how teaching assistants were used, it was evident from the data that they were generally well regarded in terms of being a valuable asset and representing good value for money.

The training provided by the seminars was well received, with the majority of attendees reporting positively on the trainers' knowledge and presentation skills (55.8% excellent, 24.3% very good, 11.2% good, 1.1% satisfactory), the extent to which the seminar objectives were met (46.4% excellent, 32.2% very good, 13.5% good, 1.5% satisfactory) and the quality of the materials (37.1% excellent, 34.8% very good, 17.2% good, 3.4% satisfactory). The data indicates that the seminars were successful in developing attendees knowledge and understanding in relation to learning disability, SEN and inclusion, Mencap's rationale for the Inspired Educators project and the effective use of TAs to support/work with pupils with SEN

It was clear from the responses to the questionnaires that TAs were used in a variety of ways in schools represented. The dominant uses were *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class* with 46.6% and 45.8% of respondents respectively indicating TAs were 'often used' in these ways. However, in addition to these, three other forms of use were identified by around a third of respondents as 'often used'. The interesting comparison is that despite 46.6% of respondents indicating *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN* was a mode of deployment 'often used', only 16.6% of respondents in pre seminar questionnaire felt it was 'very effective'. This percentage dropped to just 6.7% in the post seminar questionnaire, suggesting that the input received had led to further questioning of the effectiveness of this practice. A similar issue emerged with *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*. Though 45.8% said TAs were often used in this way only 26.6% felt it was a

'very effective' mode of deployment. This then dropped to 9.7% in the post seminar questionnaire. In relation to all areas of TA activity included in the questionnaire there was drop in the number of respondents believing them to be 'very effective' in the post seminar questionnaire.

A number of issues were highlighted that related to the themes of communication and TA preparedness. In the case of all statements related to this issue within the questionnaire, the proportion of respondents indicating a level of agreement ('agree' or 'strongly agree') was never more than 50% of those who could have responded to say that this good practice takes place in their school. The highest proportion of respondents indicating a level of agreement with any statement was 47.3% (for *Teachers are able to work with/manage TAs effectively*). The statements *TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom*, *TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom* and *Communication between teachers and TAs is good* were all agreed with ('agree' or strongly agree') by approximately 45% of respondents. Though a lot of respondents missed out this question and so the conclusion cannot be drawn that more than half did not feel able to give this positive response, between a fifth and quarter of those who could have responded recorded responses of 'don't know', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. Because those surveyed were typically senior leaders even a response of 'don't know' is relevant to consider as arguably for a strategic leader simply not knowing reveals a need for some school self-evaluation in order to find out. The statements *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs* and *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms* drew higher levels of disagreement. These were disagreed or strongly disagreed with by 36.1% and 37.2% respectively. This might be explained by the fact these have a timetabling implication as time needs to be provided for these to take place. Without this, the reliance may be on the goodwill of TAs to arrive or stay beyond their allocated time and opportunistic conversations rather than planned opportunities. After the seminars many respondents indicated that they needed to develop practice in relation to communication and TA preparedness.

Only 38% of respondents felt that TAs had sufficient skills and knowledge in relation to the National Curriculum and less than half (45.5%) of respondents felt teachers understood the role of the TA. Only about a third of respondents felt the role of TAs was understood by parents. The latter finding is important in terms of ensuring parents are kept informed, as stakeholders, when changes are being made to the deployment of TAs that are likely to impact on individual pupils' experiences of the support they receive.

There are clear indications from the data that those attending the seminars were caused to re-appraise their views of current practice in relation to forms of TA deployment, the time devoted to particular TA activities and the effectiveness of these. In terms of achieving the Inspired Educators project's aims of engaging senior leaders who would then lead change, evidence of impact is provided by the high proportion (80.9%) of attendees indicating that they intended to develop an action plan. Though 44.6% of attendees indicated that they would send teachers

on the Inspired Educators training available via the Teaching Schools, 40.1% were not sure. This could be explained in a variety of ways. One explanation may be that it was not made sufficiently clear what this offered and how schools could access it. More likely is that attendees wanted to think more about this and discuss it back at their schools. This might be because they did not have the authority to make a decision or because they needed to take a more considered decision based on their particular school's current priorities and stage of development. For some the seminar input may have provided sufficient stimulus for the school to take forward developments independently without further input. An individual school's judgement that there is no need to access the teacher INSET phase of the Inspired Educator's project may therefore be a positive decision, based on the leadership team's appraisal of their own capacity to facilitate change.

Chapter 3: Teacher INSET

The training provided by the Teaching School trainers appears to have been well received. The majority of attendees reported positively on the trainers' knowledge and presentation skills, (90.9% rating as 'good' or better), the extent to which the INSET objectives were met (89.8% rating as 'good' or better) and the quality of the materials (78.6% rating as 'good' or better).

By far the most popular reason given for accessing the Teacher INSET was a desire to improve the effective use of TAs. This corresponded with the main reason given by those who attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars. Whilst not necessarily an indication that practice was underdeveloped or weak in this area, it does suggest school staff, whether in more senior positions or classroom teachers, recognised the need for a focus on this area as part of the process of continued school improvement. It was evident from the data that TAs are generally well regarded in terms of being a valuable asset and representing good value for money. The value of TAs had also been recognised by those who had attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars, but as a group those attending the teacher INSET were more positive on this point, with 73% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they represented value for money and 82.1% agreeing or strongly that they were a valuable asset. This may reflect the difference between the strategic, whole school perspective of senior leaders compared to the more pragmatic perspective of the classroom teacher regarding the contribution of the support they receive.

It was clear from the responses to the questionnaires that TAs were used in a variety of ways in schools. The dominant uses of TAs were *In class general support with focus on those with SEN*, *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class* and *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class*. In all three cases the proportion of respondents viewing these as 'very effective' dropped in the post INSET questionnaire. Alongside this change, there was also a substantial increase in the proportion of respondents recording a response of 'somewhat effective' in the post INSET questionnaire. The implication is that some who had previously been confident enough to record a response of 'very effective' were only prepared to record a response of 'somewhat effective' post INSET. It is important to recognise that 'effectiveness' is both an interpretable construct and subject to a range of variables. It is possible, for example, to interpret

effectiveness in terms of the effect on a particular child with SEN and this could be in relation to social, emotional and academic impact. Effectiveness might also be judged in terms of the broader positive effect in classrooms, in terms of, for example, reducing instances of off-task behaviour or disruption and allowing more time for the teacher to teach (Webster et al 2010). As some of the questionnaire respondents noted in their additional comments, TAs are individuals with their own strengths and weakness. It could be argued that though some forms of deployment may be intrinsically more effective than others, effectiveness of any TA activity is influenced by the individual undertaking it and the suitability of this activity in the particular context within which they are working. This does not invalidate the questions posed regarding effectiveness but highlights the point that the interest is not so much in *what* individuals consider to be effective but in the *change* in views of effectiveness as an indication that thinking has been affected by the INSET.

A number of issues were highlighted related to the themes of communication and TA preparedness. Just under a third of respondents expressed a level of disagreement with the statements *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs* and *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms*. The common characteristic of these two statements is that through the use of the word *opportunity* they carry a stronger timetabling implication. In relation to other areas related to communication and preparedness explored within the questionnaires there was less marked concern conveyed by the data provided. However, taking into account those who recorded responses of 'not sure' in addition to those recording levels of disagreement, it is important to recognise that though the level of agreement may be relatively high, a sizeable proportion did not feel able to record either 'agree' or 'strongly agree'. For example, though approximately 63% agreed with statement *TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom* around a third did not give a response of either 'agree' or 'strongly agree'. In the case of *Teachers receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions*, the proportion selecting a response of 'strongly disagree, disagree' or 'don't know' was 44.2% and so higher than the proportion who indicated a level of agreement.

A common issue emerging from the pre INSET questionnaire and the head teacher and SENCO pre seminar questionnaire was doubt over the extent to which parents understood the role of TAs. It may simply be reference to a general lack of understanding or the implication may be a misunderstanding in the sense of holding a particular belief about the role of the TA that was at odds with the way the school was deploying them. Whatever the interpretation, the implication is that in taking forward changes based on the input from the seminars and INSET, schools and individual teachers need to consider how they keep parents informed so that the reasons for new ways of working are understood.

A high proportion (66.3%) of those completing the pre INSET questionnaire felt teachers understood the role of the TA. It is important, of course, to recognise that those completing the questionnaire were teachers. There was less certainty in the response to this point from those who attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars, with only 45.5% feeling able to record a response of agree or strongly

agree in relation to the statement *The role of TAs is understood by teachers*. A limitation of the data is inevitably that different schools were represented at the head teacher and SENCO seminars and the teacher INSET, but viewed simply in terms of the differing proportions this would suggest a different perspective between senior leaders and classroom practitioners.

There are clear indications from the data that those attending the Teacher INSET were caused to re-appraise their views of their school's current practice in relation to forms of TA deployment, the time devoted to particular TA activities and the effectiveness of these. Approximately one third (32.6%) of respondents indicated that they planned to make changes to their practice and 37.1% indicated that they may make changes after some thought. In terms of assessing impact of the INSET, this would suggest that there had been a post training reaction in terms of some changes in thinking that were likely to act as the precursors to changes in individuals' practice and broader organisational impact.

Chapter 4: Head Teacher and SENCO three month follow up questionnaire

With only 47 completed three month follow up questionnaires returned in total the response rate was relatively low, representing only approximately 18% of those who completed the head teacher and SENCO post seminar questionnaire. The number is a reasonable sample in itself but a number of key questions within the questionnaire relied on comparison across all three data collection points. Only 21 respondents completed all three questionnaires and not all of these completed every question within them, leading to variations in sample size between the three data collection points for this group. Any discussion of patterns or comparison across data sets must necessarily be tentative. The intended comparison of responses across the three data collection points was only possible for those who had completed all three questionnaires and there can be no assumption that their views are representative of the much larger group of head teachers and SENCOs who completed the pre and post seminar questionnaires. The main value of this data is in illustrating the experience of a limited number of head teachers, SENCOs and other senior leaders who had been exposed to the Inspired Educators project. Within these limitations there are some points that can be made regarding the impact of the project.

There is some evidence that, within the schools represented by respondents who completed all three questionnaires, engagement with the Inspired Educators project impacted positively on practice. In the third questionnaire there was an increase in the proportion of respondents indicating that their school's practice was 'good or 'outstanding'. The increase in the number of respondents indicating their practice 'requires improvement' in the post seminar questionnaire can also be interpreted as an indication that the seminar led to a questioning of practice. However it should be recognised that the differing sample sizes might also explain the increase in this response if, for example, those who did not answer it in the pre seminar questionnaire all selected 'requires improvement' in the post seminar questionnaire.

With the exception of *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* there was an increase in the three month follow up

questionnaire in those recording a response of 'about right' compared to the post seminar questionnaire in relation to the time devoted to all forms of TA deployment listed. This is a possible indication that engagement with the Inspired Educators project has led to changes in the amount of time devoted to specific activities or, if not changes, a reappraisal of time spent in relation to likely and actual impact.

In the case of all areas of TA activity, the number of respondents recording a response of 'very effective' in the three month follow up questionnaire increased. The largest gains were in relation to *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*. This could indicate that over the period of time since attendance at the head teacher and SENCO seminars action had been taken in the school that had improved the quality of these forms of in class support, leading to this more positive appraisal of practice. The head teachers and SENCOs considered there had been improvements in relation to all eight forms of TA deployment listed within the three month follow up questionnaires. The areas where most improvement was noted was *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN*, *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*. Comparison between the pre seminar data and the three month follow up questionnaire data also suggested there was greater confidence in relation to communication between teachers and TAs but the different sample sizes could also explain the differences.

An important outcome from the head teacher and SENCO seminars was that those in senior positions who attended developed an action plan. The response from the 267 respondents who completed the post seminar questionnaire was encouraging on this point with 80.9% of respondents indicating that they would be developing an action plan and 6.0% indicating that TA use was already part of their school improvement plan (or other action plan). Amongst those who completed the three month follow up questionnaire this intention translated into 63.8% drawing up an action plan or incorporating new actions into an existing plan. It is, of course, impossible to say with any degree of certainty whether the group who completed the three month follow up questionnaire is representative of the full group of 267 who completed the post INSET questionnaire.

The majority of respondents (57.4%) considered that engagement with the Inspired Educators project had some degree of positive impact. In the case of 6.4% they felt this was a 'Major Impact'. Some individual respondents commented on the value of exposure to the research on effective use of TAs and the insight it provided into practice outside of their own school

The low number of head teachers, SENCOs and other senior leaders responding to the third questionnaire means it is impossible to provide strong messages from this data about the impact of the Inspired Educators project based on changes across the three data collection points. There are some encouraging signs within this data but overall the three month follow up questionnaire represented a missed opportunity for senior leaders to make their voices heard with regard to the issue of TA deployment and the extent to which access to training and subsequent action

planning in schools can address some of the nationally expressed criticisms of practice. Clearly there is a variety of reasons why individuals do not complete questionnaires. The design of the questionnaires may have been one factor. They were long and required the individual to dedicate a period of time to their completion. However an important message for the teaching profession arising from this evaluation may be that it is difficult for educational researchers to construct an evidence informed argument regarding the need for quality training without the engagement of key stakeholders.

Chapter 5: Teacher three month follow up questionnaire

The response rate for the three month follow up questionnaire was very low so relatively large percentage differences in particular views are attributable to one or two people. Any discussion of patterns or comparison across data sets must necessarily be tentative. The intended comparison of responses across the three data collection points was only possible for those who had completed all three questionnaires and there can be no assumption that their views are representative of the much larger group of teachers who completed the pre and post INSET questionnaires. The group of 12 who completed all three questionnaires represented a subset of the 19 who completed the third questionnaire. The main value of this data is in illustrating the experience of a few teachers who had been exposed to the project. Within these limitations there are some points that can be made regarding the impact of the project.

The questionnaires had been designed around a core set of repeated questions related to the time devoted to specific activities and perceptions of effectiveness. The premise in relation to time spent was that the INSET might cause the respondents to question the current balance between the different activities, leading to a reduction of 'about right' responses. It was anticipated that this would increase again by the three month follow up questionnaire based on changes as a result of engagement with the project. A similar pattern was anticipated in relation to effectiveness. In the case of the time devoted to specific activities the responses did not conform to the anticipated pattern. Amongst the 12 respondents who completed all three questionnaires the proportion indicating the time spent on specific activities in the three month follow up questionnaire was 'about right' had decreased compared to the post INSET questionnaire. It is also worthy of note that this was a different pattern to the head teachers and SENCOs where there was an increase in the three month follow up questionnaire in those recording a response of 'about right' compared to the post seminar questionnaire. Responses to the question on effectiveness across the three questionnaires adhered more closely to the anticipated pattern. There was a reduced proportion of 'very effective' responses in relation to specific modes of deployment in the post INSET questionnaire, followed by an increase in the three month follow up questionnaire. This could indicate some questioning of practice resulting from the INSET and subsequent positive changes.

With so few respondents the number of additional comments gathered through the three month follow up questionnaire were minimal. Some individual respondents commented on the value of exposure to the research on effective use of TAs and the

opportunity to reflect on practice. A number of recommendations to other schools of possible ways to develop practice related to better communication.

Around a third of those who responded to the three month follow up questionnaire indicated that there had been positive developments in relation to how they worked with TAs. The one aspect where there was less strength of agreement was in response to the statement *My working relationship with TAs has improved*. A possible explanation is that respondents already felt their relationships with TAs were good before engaging with the Inspired Educators project.

Around half of those who responded to the third questionnaire felt that within their schools there had been either minor or substantial improvement in relation to *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*. For all other areas of TA activity between 20% and 37% felt there had been some degree of improvement. These responses regarding the degree of improvement need to be viewed in the context of the post INSET questionnaire where the majority of respondents felt practice was already either 'somewhat effective' or 'very effective'

Compared to those who had completed the head teacher and SENCO three month follow up questionnaire, the teachers were a little less positive about the impact of engagement with the project. None of those responding to the teacher three month follow up questionnaire indicated that engagement with the project had *a major impact, with clearly identifiable changes in practice across the school*. Just below a third (31.6%) considered that there had been *some impact, with some specific areas of practice being strengthened*. As with any other comparison with the responses of head teacher and SENCOs, it is important to recognise that different schools were represented and there were differences in sample size.

Just as with the head teacher and SENCO three month follow up questionnaire, the low response rate from teachers can be viewed as missed opportunity for practitioners to make their voices heard with regard to the issue of TA deployment and the extent to which access to training and subsequent action planning in schools can address some of the nationally expressed criticisms of practice. There were practical factors related to both the design of the questionnaire and the mode of distribution employed which undoubtedly impacted on response rates and it is also accepted that teachers, like head teachers and SENCOs, are dealing with many competing priorities. However, without the engagement of key stakeholders it is difficult for educational researchers to construct an evidence informed argument regarding the need for quality training.

Chapter 6: Case study visits

The case studies illustrated the obvious but important point that the Inspired Educators project was not tackling an area of professional practice that schools had not previously considered. To varying degrees, schools are likely to have at least reflected on their practice in this area even if not enacting changes. It is against this background that the impact on practice and behaviour needs to be considered. For some schools the Inspired Educators project had reinforced the changes they had

already started to make in their use of TA support. This validating role should not be underestimated as a form of impact. A number of the senior leaders interviewed commented on the value of the head teacher and SENCO seminars in reassuring them that they were leading developments that were underpinned by an evidence base and moving in the right direction. Some of those interviewed also indicated that awareness of the research presented in the head teacher and SENCO seminars provided a degree of leverage in school when taking forward changes that might challenge existing views on the purpose of TAs and effective modes of deployment.

Echoing a view emerging from the questionnaires, opportunities for communication between TAs and teachers remained an area of concern for some schools. The issue tended to relate to insufficient opportunities and those that did exist often relying on the goodwill of the TA in staying after their allocated hours. Timetabling means that in a secondary school the TA may be moving to a different lesson at the end of the period and this inevitably makes liaison difficult. The problem may not be so great in a primary school but there is still the issue that opportunities to liaise are restricted to lunchtimes, break times and before and after school. Some schools referred to various proformas that might allow a degree of communication in paper form.

There was evidence that engagement with the Inspired Educators project had supported schools in changing perceptions of the TA role and, where necessary, changing how TAs were deployed. The main change related to a stronger focus on the outcomes of support rather than assuming the presence of additional support was inherently beneficial. A number of senior leaders expressed in different ways the form the latter assumption sometimes took. They talked, for example, of changing the view of the TA as the 31st child in the classroom or as a 'spare pair of hands'. There was also reference to the model of TAs 'glued' to a particular child. These types of comment illustrated that for senior leaders trying to bring about changes it was not just a case of implementing a different set of processes. There was a need to encourage staff to reconsider some fundamental views on the role of the TA. In some schools it seemed that senior leaders were attempting to lead change without informing staff of the school's participation in the Inspired Educators project. At best this seemed to lead to school staff recognising that changes were taking place but not being entirely clear as to impetus behind this. At worst there was an example of a school where some of those interviewed associated the changes with budget cuts and the possible need for redundancy. If this is the perceived purpose it is less likely that staff will be enthusiastic participants in the process of change.

If TAs are viewed as more than the '31st child in the classroom' or a 'spare pair of hands' and there is a stronger focus on outcomes then it is inevitable this leads to higher expectations related to the TA role. This point seemed to be reflected in the comment that the approach to the recruitment of TAs had changed. The school in question had reportedly become more discerning in appointing TAs and acknowledged that they were now more ready to turn down applicants. This sometimes made it harder to appoint to vacancies.

Though there were some specific criticisms of the head teacher and SENCO seminar, most comments were constructive, aimed at enhancing these events. Some of those who had attended the events indicated that a whole day would have been beneficial. Extending the time might also have enabled some of the other points raised to be addressed relating to the incorporation of more opportunities for discussion, activities based on case studies or vignettes and a better balance between delivery via PowerPoint and active engagement. One interviewee was critical of the age of the research and also suggested that the seminars should have been delivered by practitioners. The question this prompts is whether, despite being four years old, anything very much has changed in relation to the areas researched. The age of the research would only be a relevant consideration if practice had moved on generally in relation to TA deployment and the issues no longer existed or had changed substantially. This also relates to the point that the seminars should have been led by school based practitioners. To be effective, these practitioners would need to be from schools that had moved their practice on based on the research and be able to communicate to others both the key messages from the research and how schools generally, rather than just their own school, could use this to develop their practice. There is perhaps an implication from the criticism voiced that the complementary but distinctive roles of the presenters as the experts in the research and the attendees as experts in practice needed to be stressed.

About the Inspired Educators Project

Mencap's Inspired Educators project aimed to deliver expert advice, information and training to support schools in maximising the impact of Teaching Assistants (TA). In the academic year September 2013 to July 2014. Mencap sought to support over 1,500 education professionals across England through the project.

In partnership with the research team behind the Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS) project, Mencap developed and delivered nine seminars in six different regions in England. These sessions exposed head teachers, other school leaders and SENCOs to the findings from the research and explored strategies intended to maximise the effectiveness of TAs in their schools.

In order to deliver training directly to schools a number of colleagues from six Teaching Schools were trained by the Mencap team as trainers. During the academic year 2013-14 the trainers delivered INSET for schools using a variety of delivery models.

Canterbury Christ Church University was commissioned by Mencap to provide an external evaluation of the project.

The research underpinning the Inspired Educators project

The Inspired Educators project is underpinned by the research carried out for the Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS) project. The main aims of the DISS project were:

- To provide an accurate, systematic and representative description of the types of support staff in schools; their characteristics and deployment, and how these have changed over time.
- To analyse the impact or effect of support staff on teachers and teaching, pupil learning, behaviour and academic progress.

It resulted in a series of reports and additional publications by members of the project team, including *Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants* (Russell et al 2012) that was provided for those attending the head teacher and SENCO seminars as part of the Inspired Educators project.

The DISS project was a large scale piece of research. It drew on nearly 20,000 responses to questionnaire surveys (aimed at schools, support staff and teachers) as well as 1,670 workload diaries completed by support staff. The research team carried out detailed classroom observations in 114 schools and interviews with 591 staff and pupils. Over 8000 pupils across seven year groups in 153 schools were involved in a survey to test the impact of TAs on children's learning and behaviour. In addition interactions between TAs and pupils, and more than 100 hours of talk was recorded.

A major, and widely reported, finding from the research was the existence of a consistent negative relationship between the amount of support given and the progress children made in core subjects (English, Maths, Science) even after controlling for pupil characteristics such as prior attainment and SEN status. The implication of this research evidence was that the more support pupils received from teaching assistants, the less progress they made. Other findings included:

- TAs tended to be more concerned with the completion of tasks rather than learning and understanding. Teachers were more focused on the latter.
- Support staff generally reduced teachers' workload and stress levels and increased their job satisfaction. Teachers felt that they helped to raise the quality of teaching, and observations showed that they increased the amount of individual attention a child received and improved classroom control.
- In 2005/6 there was little or no association between the amount of TA involvement and primary and secondary pupils' Positive Approach to Learning (PAL) rating. However, the second survey (in 2007/8) showed that Year 9 secondary pupils appeared to benefit from TAs' involvement. The more support they received, the better their relationships with peers became. They also became less distractible, and better at following instructions. Paradoxically, help from TAs also made them more independent.
- While the TAs who were surveyed were extremely dedicated – many were working extra hours without pay – their routine deployment to pupils who needed most help seemed to be the heart of the problem.

The DISS project has exerted an influence on national policy. The Lamb Inquiry (DCSF 2009) endorsed the DISS findings and highlighted two main issues: the skills and levels of qualification of TAs; and the appropriate deployment of teaching assistants and the substitution of teaching assistants for teachers. These were issues the Lamb Inquiry considered needed to be addressed by school leadership teams and in the training and preparation of teachers for the effective use of other adults in the classroom. The DCSF accepted the recommendations that guidance on the effective deployment of teaching assistants should be produced by the Training and Development Agency for Schools and the Teacher Standards should be reviewed to ensure that newly qualified teachers understand how best to deploy teaching assistants to support all pupils.

The broader context

The DISS research that underpins the Inspired Educators project needs to be understood in the broader context of a steady growth in the number of TAs since 1997 and emerging criticisms and concerns from a variety of sources.

Government statistics (DfE 2013) indicate that in 2013 the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) TAs stood at 243,700. This compares with a figure of approximately 24,000 in 1997 (DfEE 1997). In 2004 Ofsted suggested that increases observed represented 'a significant change in schools' approach to staffing in order to support pupils with SEN, with a trend towards employing teaching assistants (TAs) and other non-teaching staff and away from specialist teachers' (Ofsted 2004: 16). The report noted a tendency in schools to allocate the teaching assistant to the lowest attaining pupils and those with SEN and commented that there was a belief amongst teachers that these pupils would make little progress without that support.

In the early stages of this growth in numbers the government and Ofsted perspectives on TAs were largely positive. For example, the DfEE's (2000a) *Supporting the Teaching Assistant – A Good Practice Guide* stated that it was 'encouraging to note the ample evidence from research and inspection that many TAs are helping to raise standards in the classrooms in which they work' (DfEE 2000a: 7). Further demonstrating the value attached to TAs there were also attempts to improve the professional development available to them through the production of induction training materials (DfEE 2000b, DfES 2001a). Drawing on inspections of schools, Ofsted (2002: 5) suggested that 'the presence of teaching assistants improves the quality of teaching'.

In the Ofsted (2004) report *Special Educational Needs and Disability: Towards Inclusive Schools* concerns started to be raised in relation to increasing reliance on TAs to support pupils with SEN and low attaining groups. The report highlighted a number of problems both with methods of in-class support and the withdrawal of pupils for work out of class. With regard to in-class support it was suggested that the allocation of the teaching assistant to a low attaining group reduced the extent to which the teacher planned tasks so that pupils with SEN could undertake them successfully. The suggestion was that whilst teachers were planning and teaching lessons that were well matched to most pupils needs, they relied on teaching assistants to break the tasks down further so that pupils with SEN could participate. Consequently the emphasis was on how to enable access to the activity the rest of the class was undertaking, with an insufficient focus on what the pupil with SEN needed to learn or on how to improve their understanding and skills. Ofsted (2004) saw this as a common reason why a significant number of pupils with SEN made too little progress, despite good teaching for the majority of the class.

The problems Ofsted (2004) identified with regard to support out of class were associated with the pupil's loss of contact with the class teacher and their peer group. As well as the issues related to the social dimension of inclusion, this also raised the point that pupils with SEN were being denied access to teaching from a qualified teacher. Ofsted (2004) phrased this point with a degree of caution, stating,

‘Additionally, those pupils who needed contact with the best teaching, whatever the personal qualities and skills of the teaching assistants, were denied it.’ (Ofsted 2004: 17)

In expressing the point in this way, Ofsted seemed to be attempting to make it clear that they were not criticising the quality of teaching assistants but questioning the effects of methods of deployment.

Ofsted’s 2006 report *Inclusion: Does it Matter Where Pupils Are Taught?* also made reference to the use of TAs. It suggested that there was a general misconception that the provision of additional resources, including the allocation of TA support, was the key requirement for individual pupils. Specifically on the subject of the use of TAs the report commented,

‘Pupils in mainstream schools where support from teaching assistants was the main type of provision were less likely to make good academic progress than those who had access to specialist teaching in those schools.’
(Ofsted 2006: 3)

Though Ofsted (2004, 2006) had noted an issue, it was the reporting of research by Blatchford et al (2009) in particular that fuelled the debate about the effectiveness of TAs. The research report was complex, providing detailed information on methods used to gather data and the analysis process. However, as is often the case, the findings were reported in the media as sound bites, separate from much of the surrounding discussion that set them in a broader context. The finding that perhaps attracted greatest attention was the negative relationship between the amount of support a pupil received and the progress they made in core national curriculum subjects. The report had noted,

‘The more support pupils received, the less progress they made, even after controlling for other factors that might be expected to explain the relationship such as pupils’ prior attainment, SEN status and income deprivation.’
(Blatchford et al 2009: 34)

Ofsted (2010) was critical of how additional adults were deployed in some schools, commenting,

‘Where additional adult support was provided in the classroom for individuals, this was sometimes a barrier to including them successfully and enabling them to participate. In too many examples seen during the review, when a child or young person was supported closely by an adult, the adult focused on the completion of the task rather than on the actual learning. Adults intervened too quickly, so preventing children and young people from having time to think or to learn from their mistakes.’
(Ofsted 2010: 46)

The 2011 SEN Green Paper devoted a paragraph to the issue of TA use that, though primarily positive, reflected some of the issues highlighted by Blatchford et al (2009) and Ofsted (2004, 2006, 2010), stating,

'Within schools, support staff can make a real difference to the achievement of pupils with SEN, but they need to be deployed and used effectively in order to do so. Some schools have helped to achieve significant improvements in the outcomes of their pupils with SEN by reviewing the amount of time spent with, and type of support from, teaching assistants. Evidence published in 2009 showed how teaching assistants can have a positive impact on pupils' self-esteem. However, teaching assistant time should never be a substitute for teaching from a qualified teacher. Too often, the most vulnerable pupils are supported almost exclusively by teaching assistants.'

(DFE 2011: 63)

Though acknowledging the potential contribution of support staff, the 2011 SEN Green Paper was clear in its message that,

'Children with SEN need more, not less, time with the school's most skilled and qualified teachers.' (DFE 2011: 63)

Despite the prominent critical perspectives of more recent years, there have been more positive messages. A systematic literature review by Alborz et al (2009) suggested that trained and supported teaching assistants (TAs) could have a positive impact on the progress of individual or small groups of children in the development of basic literacy skills. It also seemed that there was a less measurable but nonetheless important effect in terms of the contribution of 'sensitive' TA support in facilitating pupil engagement in learning and social activities, with the class teacher and their peers. Alborz et al (2009) expanded on the notion of 'sensitive' TA support, suggesting the sensitivity involved both facilitating interaction, and being aware of times when pupils needed to undertake self-directed choices and actions. From the literature reviewed, Alborz et al (2009) concluded that,

'Use of TA support allows teachers to engage pupils in more creative and practical activities and to spend more time working with small groups or individuals. Class-related workload is somewhat reduced when working with a TA, but the teacher role may become more managerial as this workload may increase. An adult presence in classroom makes teachers feel supported and less stressed. The knowledge that pupils were receiving improved levels of attention and support was also reported to enhance job satisfaction for teachers' (Alborz et al 2009: 1).

Despite concerns raised by Ofsted and others, teachers tend to view TAs positively. Blatchford et al (2008:13) had noted that 'the general view in schools was that support staff did have an impact on pupil attainment, behaviour and attitudes: the problem headteachers faced was proving it.' Research by Ellis et al (2012) found that just over half of respondents to their online questionnaire considered that the progress of pupils with SEN was dependent on the availability of a TA. They also reported a strong belief amongst case study participants interviewed 'that having a TA present is what makes teaching a diverse range of pupils manageable' (Ellis et al 2012: 103). This general positivity by teachers towards TAs has been recognised Webster et al (2010):

'It is worth noting that findings from teacher questionnaires consistently showed that, from the teachers' perspective, TAs and other support staff had a strong positive effect on their job satisfaction, levels of stress and workload – chiefly by relieving teachers of many of their administrative duties. Results from systematic observations also confirmed teachers' views that TAs in particular had a positive effect in classrooms, in terms of reducing instances of off-task behaviour or disruption and allowing more time for the teacher to teach'.

(Webster et al 2010: 321).

In light of critical comments within the literature outlined in this section related to the use of TAs, Mencap's endeavours through the Inspired Educators project to develop and deliver a programme of activities to build the capacity of schools and individual teachers to make more effective use of TAs to support pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) is very timely. Focusing on head teachers and SENCOs through the initial seminars would seem to offer the potential to bring about change at a whole school level, based on an increased understanding of both effective deployment strategies and methods of ensuring TAs are appropriately prepared to provide the support required. It is also a strategy that reflects Balshaw's (2010) view that the attitudes of school leaders matter in relation to the effective deployment of TAs. In light of the extensive research by Blatchford et al (2008, 2009) and others cited in this section it would seem important that heads and SENCOs are exposed to and develop an understanding of the evidence bases that exist that can inform practice. The involvement of teachers through the INSET sessions within the Inspired Educators project offers the potential to ensure that changes at whole school level proposed in action plans are understood and enacted at the level of day to day practice.

Methodology for the evaluation of the project

The evaluation carried out by Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) was ambitious, the aim being not only to understand the impact from the perspective of the trainers, senior school managers, teachers and the TAs themselves but to do this longitudinally. As such it is one of the few pieces of research that maps onto Kirkpatrick's (1967) framework for training evaluation. Kirkpatrick emphasised that training evaluation should not simply consist of post training reactions, but the identification of behavioural changes and organisational impact. CCCU sought to do this with a series of questionnaires distributed to stakeholders but also through 11 case studies.

The evaluation of the project was based on three distinct stages.

Stage 1

The first stage involved the collection of data in relation to each key phase of the project's delivery. The methods used were:

1. A paper based questionnaire completed by colleagues from the Teaching Schools immediately after they had received their training as trainers (See Appendix 1).
2. An electronic questionnaire completed by head teachers and SENCOs prior to attending regional seminars (See Appendix 2).
3. A paper based questionnaire completed by head teachers and SENCOs immediately after attending regional seminars (See Appendix 3).
4. A paper based questionnaire (with an electronic alternative available) completed by teachers prior to attending the INSET session(s) provided by the Teaching School trainers (See Appendix 4).
5. A paper based questionnaire (with an electronic alternative available) completed by teachers immediately after attending the INSET session provided by the Teaching School trainers. Where training models were employed that involved several sessions the questionnaire was completed after the final input from the training provider (see Appendix 5).

Through these activities it was possible to provide a perspective on the immediate impact of the Inspired Educators Project in terms of, for example, changes in views on existing practice and intentions to take action in school based on input received. Data was also gathered that indicated how well received the different events were that took place as part of the project.

Response rates for the head teacher and SENCO questionnaires² were very high. Data received from the training providers indicate that approximately 300 heads and

² Within the report the phrase *head teacher and SENCO questionnaire* is used but it should be recognised that not all of those attending the seminars were head teachers or SENCOs.

SENCOs were registered to attend the training. The pre seminar questionnaire was completed by 277 respondents and the post seminar questionnaire by 267 respondents, representing response rates of approximately 92% and 89% respectively. The high response rate is probably attributable to the fact that the pre seminar questionnaire was linked to the registration process and the post seminar questionnaire was completed at the end of the seminar rather than attendees completing and returning it independently afterwards. There are a number of possible explanations for the variations between the figures in the pre and post seminar results. The two most likely are that not all those who registered attended or some participants chose not to complete the follow up questionnaire. It should also be noted that in the case of both the pre and post seminar questionnaires, not all respondents answered all questions. Where percentages are used within this report these are based on the overall number who could have answered the question.

Response rates for the teacher questionnaires were not as high, though still very good for a questionnaire. The pre INSET questionnaire was completed by 788 respondents, which is estimated to be approximately 66% of those who attended the training. The post INSET questionnaire was completed by 598 respondents. In the vast majority of cases both questionnaires were completed in paper form although there was provision for both to be administered electronically. There are various possible explanations for the lower response rate compared to the head teacher and SENCO questionnaire. One reason is that not all Teaching Schools were able to return questionnaires. We know, for example, that one of Teaching Schools mixed up the two questionnaires in one of their early INSET sessions and was not able to return any data from this event. A further reason relates to the fact that most of the Teaching schools did not use the intended approach of an online pre INSET questionnaire linked to a registration process. This meant that the Teaching Schools had to factor time into their INSET sessions for teachers to complete the pre INSET questionnaire at the start of their input as well as the post INSET questionnaire at the end. Not all Teaching Schools may have had time to do this and even where they did, it is likely that some attendees had to leave early and so missed the post INSET questionnaire. It is also possible that some teachers simply exercised their right not to take part in the evaluation. It should be noted that in the case of both the pre and post seminar questionnaires not all respondents answered all questions. Where percentages are presented within this report, these are based on the overall number who could have answered the question.

Stage 2

The second stage of the project sought to explore the longer term impact of the Inspired Educators Project on schools' practice through identifying behavioural changes and organisational impact (Kirkpatrick 1967). The general principle for data collection for this stage was that, three months after a school's last contact with the Teaching School trainers, the head teacher, SENCO and teachers were sent a follow up questionnaire via email to gauge short to medium term impact of involvement in the project. Copies of these questionnaires are available in Appendix 6 (Head teachers and SENCO) and Appendix 7 (Teacher). Where a school had only been represented at the head teacher and SENCO seminar the attendee(s) was sent

an email containing the link to their questionnaire and a link to the teacher questionnaire to distribute. The three month follow up questionnaire for teachers had been designed so that it could still be completed by teachers who had not directly accessed training from the Teaching Schools, with certain questions by-passed.

In the case of the head teachers and SENCOs, detailed information on attendees had been collected by Mencap and it was therefore possible to send out an electronic questionnaire by email as planned. The response rate was disappointing. Only 47 responses to the head teacher and SENCO three month follow up questionnaire were received. This was a considerable drop compared to the response to the pre and post seminar questionnaires. A sample of 47 heads, SENCOs and other senior leaders is a credible size in its own right upon which to base comments on impact. Its limitation lies in any comparison between the proportions of responses to particular questions across the three data collection points. The respondents were probably not representative of those who completed the pre and post seminars questionnaires. It should also be noted that, of the 47 who returned the third head teacher and SENCO questionnaire, only 21 had completed all three questionnaires. This means that for a number of key questions from the questionnaire that were designed to identify a change in view (e.g on the perceived effectiveness of different modes of deployment), comparison can only be made for this smaller group. The 21 respondents who completed all three questionnaires represented 19 different schools so their perspectives still have some value as examples of the impact of the project. Other questions within the third questionnaire do not rely on the comparison across the three data collection points and it is relevant to comment on the full 47 respondents.

The teacher three month follow up questionnaire was severely hampered by the practical difficulty that many of the Teaching Schools did not collect and supply email addresses for teachers attending the INSET. As previously indicated, the evaluation had been designed on the premise that each Teaching School would operate a registration process similar to that employed by Mencap, with full contact information gathered at this point and supplied to the evaluation team to enable the three month follow up questionnaire to be sent directly to the individual teacher. Instead, where the school had been represented at the head teacher and SENCO seminar the link was sent by a personally addressed email to that person, inviting them to distribute it to teachers in their school. A further personally addressed reminder email was sent later. This method of distribution essentially relied on the receiving person in the school having the time, motivation and facility to distribute the questionnaire to teachers in their school. The individual teacher in turn then needed the time and motivation to complete this. Where a particular teacher's school was not represented at the head teacher and SENCO seminars, attempts were made to find a contact person via the school's website or by telephone. In a small number of cases this method provided an individual email address but usually it was a generic school address which relied once again on the recipient supplying it to the right person. Only 19 teachers completed the three month follow up questionnaire. While the views of 19 teachers are of interest in their own right in terms of their perceptions three months on from their last direct contact with the Teaching School, these respondents are unlikely to be representative of all those who completed the pre and

post seminars questionnaires. Of the 19 teachers who returned the third teacher questionnaire, only 12 had completed all three questionnaires. These staff represented 11 schools. None of these were the same as the 19 schools represented in the heads and SENCOs three month follow up questionnaire. As with the responses to the head teacher and SENCO three month questionnaire, where questions relied on comparison across the three data collection points only the responses of the 12 who completed all three questionnaires were used.

It is common with any research involving questionnaires, especially those requiring on-line completion, for response rates to be low (Cohen et al 2010). The inability to send an email directly to those teachers who had accessed training from the Teaching Schools appears to have had a significant detrimental effect on a method already known to be vulnerable to low response rates.

Though the difficulties in getting the questionnaire to the intended recipient may be a significant factor impacting on the response rate for the teacher three month follow up questionnaire, it will not have been the only reason and does not explain the relatively low response rate for the head teacher and SENCO three month questionnaire. It is possible to speculate on other reasons. Schools are typically busy places and it is unlikely that a questionnaire will be the highest priority. The distribution also coincided with a major period of change in the field of SEN. SENCOs in particular may have been focused on preparation for major changes related to the new SEN Code of Practice (DfE 2014a). For classroom teachers the day-to-day business of preparation, teaching and marking will inevitably take precedence over the completion of a questionnaire. For some schools the need to allow a reasonable gap, even if not the full three months, after the last contact with the Teaching School also meant that in some cases the questionnaires were not sent until close to the end of the summer term and this may have been a further contributory factor.

Though this stage of the evaluation did not draw the number of responses hoped to allow the intended comparison with previous data collected, considered in conjunction with the case study data gathered at Stage 3 it provides a guide to the potential for change offered by the Inspired Educators project.

Stage 3

The third stage of the evaluation was based on case study visits to 11 schools. Due to the limited data available through the three month follow up questionnaires, the rich data gathered through this stage of the evaluation is considered to be the better guide on the potential for change. This data provides an indication of what schools can achieve through engagement with the Inspired Educators project.

All head teachers, SENCOs and others who returned questionnaires after attending the head teacher and SENCO seminars were emailed and asked if they would be willing to take part as a case study school. The hope had been to use questionnaire data to select from volunteering schools those where there seemed to have been the greatest positive effect. The intention behind this focus was to understand better what aspects of the project and the actions taken by the school had led to this effect.

In reality only 18 schools volunteered and so the process was largely one of self-selection rather than based on questionnaire data. Taking into account distribution nationally and phases represented, the 18 was reduced to the 11 required. It is probably reasonable to assume that schools putting themselves forward would only do so if they had something reasonably positive to share and so the sample of schools is likely to broadly reflect the original aim of focusing on positive impact.

During each case study visit the following staff were interviewed where possible:

- Head and/or other senior leader who attended the seminar.
- Interview with the SENCO (whether or not they attended the seminar).
- Group interview with 2 – 4 teachers (selected by the school).
- Group interview with 2 – 4 TAs (selected by the school).

Though each interview was only scheduled to last 45 – 60 minutes, the research team set aside a day for each visit, reflecting the possibility that timetabling restrictions might prevent interviews running consecutively. The interviews were semi-structured, based on a set of questions related to three key themes:

- How behaviour/practice has changed as a result of the project.
- Practical approaches/ best-practice resources.
- Attitudinal and cultural change/support for inclusive education goals more widely.

The interview schedules used for each staff group are available in Appendices 8 – 11.

On visiting each school, the researcher informed interviewees of the purpose of the research and assured them of confidentiality, but asked their permission to record the interviews for research purposes. They then asked them to sign a consent form and conducted either one to one or group interviews in a private area of the school.

The researchers used their notes and recordings to produce a summary report based on the core themes. These summaries are contained in Appendices 25 -35.

Presentation of the data within the report

A number of important points need to be taken into account when considering the data presented within this report:

- Percentages are used as it is considered that this makes it easier to recognise the proportion of respondents giving a particular response. It should be remembered that for small data sets (e.g. the responses from the trainers in chapter 1) a relatively large percentage ‘swing’ can be caused by one or two people expressing a different view.
- Where there is comparison between data collection points it needs to be acknowledged that the sample size is different. In the case of both the head teacher and SENCO pre and post seminar questionnaires and the teacher pre

and post INSET questionnaire the lower sample sizes at the second data collection point are still sufficiently large to be accepted as representative of the views of these groups. Therefore comparison of the proportion of responses to particular questions at the two data collection points is considered justified.

- Where percentages are shown these relate to the overall number of individuals who completed the particular questionnaire and therefore *could* have answered all questions within it. In some cases, for one reason or another, the individual missed out certain questions. As these non responses are not shown it means that percentages for a particular question may not add up to 100%.

Chapter 1: Training for the Training Providers

Key Points

- The majority of those trained to deliver training to schools as part of the Inspired Educators project were very experienced teachers and typically held other posts of responsibility within their schools.
- Most of the trainers had experience of delivering training in their own schools but fewer considered themselves experienced at delivering training in other schools.
- As might be expected, the confidence of individuals' varied in relation to their own delivery of the training in schools.
- Though a majority indicated they held a specialist qualification related to SEN, not all of the trainers did.
- A minority of the trainers rated the effectiveness of the methods of delivery and the quality of training materials within the training they received as satisfactory or poor.
- The training was successful in developing the trainers' understanding of the aims and objectives of the INSET they would be delivering, Mencap's reasons for developing the project and the research behind Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA).
- Trainers saw a need for the training in schools and were able to identify likely benefits for those they would be training.
- Though recognising that schools may need this training, some trainers indicated that this did not necessarily equate with schools recognising they needed it or welcoming it.
- There was not a strong sense that trainers required more ongoing support to deliver the training in schools, though just under half indicated they would access further information themselves.

Introduction

In order to deliver training directly to schools as part of the Inspired Educators project, a number of staff from six Teaching Schools were trained by the Mencap team to act as trainers. In this report these staff from the Teaching Schools are referred to as *trainers* or *training providers*. The trainers from the Teaching Schools performed a central role within the project. The training provided for them needed to ensure they had a good understanding of the aims and objectives of the INSET they would be delivering, Mencap's reasons for developing the project and the research behind Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA).

Characteristics of the Training Providers

The majority of the 22 trainers who responded to the questionnaire had held Qualified Teacher Status for many years (see Table 1.1). Though some may have had gaps in service during this period, it can be assumed that this is an indication that the majority of trainers had a lot of teaching experience.

1 -5 years	6 -10 years	11 – 15 years	16 – 20 years	21+ years
1	6	2	5	8

Table 1.1: The number of years the trainers had held QTS

The person who indicated they held QTS for 1 – 5 years had held it for five years so also had a number of years classroom experience behind them. Three had held QTS for over 30 years. Just under two thirds (63.6%³) indicated that they held a qualification in relation to SEN.

The trainers held a variety of positions in their own schools (see Table 1.2). In interpreting the table it should be noted that respondents were asked to tick any roles that applied.

Role	% (N)
Assistant Head Teacher	9.1% (2)
Class/Form Teacher	18.2% (4)
Deputy Head Teacher	13.6% (3)
Head Teacher	4.5% (1)
Inclusion Manager	9.1% (2)
SENCO	22.7% (5)
Other (<i>please state</i>)	18.2% (4)

Table 1.2: Roles held by the trainers in their own school

91.1% indicated that they were either ‘experienced’ (36.6%) or ‘very experienced’ (54.5%) in leading training for teachers/school staff from their own school. Appendix 12 includes the examples given by those who indicated they had a level of experience in leading training for teachers/school staff from their own school.

Amongst the group there was less experience of leading training for teachers/school staff from other schools/organisations. 45.4% indicated that they were either experienced (13.6%) or ‘very experienced’ (31.8%) in this type of activity. 36.4% indicated they had little experience and 18.2% had no experience. Appendix 13 includes the examples given by those who indicated they had a level of experience in leading training for teachers/school staff from other schools/organisations.

³ Percentages are used in this section for ease in recognising the proportion giving a particular response but it should be noted that with only 22 respondents 1 or 2 people giving a different view can create a big ‘swing’ in percentage terms

Views on Training Received

Though the majority of respondents were positive about the training they received (see Table 1.3), around a third rated the effectiveness of the methods of delivery and the quality of training materials as satisfactory or poor. Some of these feelings were captured in a couple of the qualitative comments in response to a later question in the questionnaire (see Appendix 14). The view expressed in these comments was that the session involved too much didactic delivery and not enough variety and interaction. These views should be set against a range of very positive responses. It could also be argued that the suggestion that 'it was very 'behind the times' in terms of how to facilitate training to teachers (didactic and repetitive)' missed the point that this was training for those who would be delivering the training in schools and therefore had a different purpose. Whilst this is not a justification for unnecessarily didactic and repetitive delivery, it should be recognised by those being trained as trainers that the project was entirely premised on the idea of the Teaching Schools being best placed to deliver the training in schools. The training for trainers was intended to provide the in depth knowledge of the research and principles behind the project in order to support this delivery. The concern expressed by this small number of respondents could be an indication that those providing the training for trainers needed to more explicit about this different purpose.

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
The tutor's knowledge and presentation skills	-	9.1% (2)	18.2% (4)	36.6% (8)	36.6% (8)
Effectiveness of training methods used	4.5% (1)	31.8% (7)	27.3% (6)	31.8% (7)	-
The quality of the training materials	4.5% (1)	27.3% (6)	31.8% (7)	27.3% (6)	9.1% (2)

Table 1.3: Views on training provided

Responses (see Table 1.4) suggest that the majority of respondents left the training feeling they understood the aims of the training and the underpinning research. Although less confidence was indicated in their ability to deliver the INSET and answer questions, most still felt able to do this as a result of the training. A relatively high proportion gave low ratings in relation to the acquisition of more knowledge about SEN and inclusion and the effective use of TAs to support/work with pupils with SEN. A likely explanation is that this is a reflection of the high levels of knowledge they already had and so may not necessarily be a negative reflection on the training.

<i>In light of the training you have received from Mencap today to what extent do you feel you:</i>	Low ← Rating → High									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
understand the aims and objectives of the Inset that you will be delivering								4	5	13
understand learning disability and why Mencap are delivering this project.							1	3	4	14
understand the research behind Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA)						2	1	5	8	6
are prepared and confident to deliver this Inset in schools			1		1	3	3	6	5	3
are able to answer the questions of school staff			1		2	3	3	7	6	
have acquired more knowledge about SEN and inclusion	3	4	3		2	2	1	1	5	1
have acquired more knowledge about the effective use of TAs to support/work with pupils with SEN		2	1	2	1	1	1	4	4	6

Table 1.4: Respondents' views on the contribution of their training to the development of their knowledge, skills and understanding related to the Inspired Educators project

Views on the training to be delivered

Respondents were asked to indicate what they were looking forward to most when delivering this INSET in schools. They gave the following responses:

- *Changing perceptions and developing learning of colleagues.*
- *Improving outcomes for all children.*
- *Informing my own practice by learning from a wide variety of teachers.*
- *Enabling people to see the need and effect change within their settings.*
- *Working together to maximise the impact of teaching assistants.*
- *To effect change for the better across our alliance.*
- *Engaging staff – allowing change to reflect and modify practice.*
- *Developing teachers' own ideas of how they could improve the use of TAs and empowering them.*
- *Making schools aware of how they can maximise TAs.*
- *Making schools aware of the potential for using TAs more effectively.*
- *Sharing important research, sharing and the airing of ideas, initiating whole school change to improve pupil attainment.*
- *Supporting TAs to help learners progress.*
- *I have delivered similar training and I enjoy the dialogue that it promotes.*
- *Delivering this message and supporting change in practice.*

- *Being confident in the contents, having something new and useful to share with schools that will have an impact.*
- *Engaging colleagues in a positive dialogue about change.*
- *Being able to share a message, about which I am convinced, which will (hopefully) impact (in the longer term) on practice in school and raising attainment for all pupils.*
- *Gaining insights into current practices in different schools: encouraging an open debate into the use of LSA/TAs and exploring ways to use them more effectively.*
- *Dispelling myths.*
- *Working with colleagues.*

As the question invites, all responses were positive. Some of these reflect a personal benefit but the majority focus on either raising awareness in schools or changing practice and/or making an impact. A couple of comments were more cautionary in their positivity:

- *This is a very controversial issue, therefore I agree that the research is sound and not under doubt. I am not really looking forward to delivering it to teaching staff. It is quite an aggressive piece of information and if dealt with insensitively could be very divisive in a school. I totally agree that the class teacher should be responsible for all children, especially SEN children and feel that this shift in attitudes is vital if SEN children are to achieve the outcomes they deserve.*
- *Enhancing the INSET to ensure it is relevant up to date and in context of the areas (geographical) where it is being delivered whilst maintaining the message and outcomes.*

The second of these perhaps carried the implication that the training as provided was not as relevant or up to date as it needed to be, nor took sufficient account of different contexts. As with all the comments, this was only one individual but such an interpretation would fit with one or two of the less positive comments in Appendix 14.

Respondents anticipated that the aspects of training listed below were likely to be of most interest/benefit to those that they trained through the project. These are grouped under broad themes:

Benefits to the individual teacher of attendance

- *Time to reflect on current practice and to be able to create a plan of action to move forward.*
- *Time to consider ways to improve their practice.*
- *Opportunity to problem solve and plan methods of improving use of TAs.*
- *Space to think about how to improve the impact. Joint discussion and decisions – ownership.*
- *Group collaboration – sharing of experiences/ideas etc.*
- *Feeling empowered rather than harassed!! Seeing change as a positive and feeling I've passed on tools to achieve this.*

Guidance on strategies and approaches

- *How to use TAs effectively.*
- *How to get TAs to enable access to the curriculum.*
- *How to move TA support forward and away from SEN children so that they have more access to the class teacher and are taught more inclusively.*
- *Making more effective use of support staff. Maximising learning of SEN pupils.*
- *Ideas for alternative and creative ways to use TAs to best effect. How to improve pupil progress.*
- *Practical support and strategies. Opportunities for discussion and sharing good practice.*
- *Practical ideas of how to implement some of the changes.*

Exposure to the research

- *Realisation of the importance of effective TA support and the negative effect if done badly.*
- *Interest – data/research findings very controversial.*
- *The research facts.*
- *Study findings.*
- *The research will be controversial but I think essential for all to understand and sign up to. The benefit will be concentrating on solutions.*
- *The actual results of the research.*

Broader change

- *The chance to change processes in school that will really make a difference to outcomes for students. It is training that is very relevant to schools currently and answers some questions they are asking.*
- *Outcomes for children and inclusive child development in schools.*
- *That we can do so much more.*

The respondents seemed to attach value to the training they would be delivering, perceiving it as needed and likely to make an impact (see Table 1.5). Eight respondents gave ratings of 5 or less for *Teaching staff will welcome this training* whereas all respondents gave ratings of 7 or above for *There is a need amongst teaching staff for this training*. This could suggest a perception that, though schools need the training, they may not recognise this or be entirely receptive to some of the messages contained and the implications for their practice

Evaluation of the following statements in relation to those to be trained:	① Not at all										a great deal ②										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
There is a need amongst teaching staff for this training								2	3	3	14										
Teaching staff will welcome this training				1	7		5	3	2	3											
This training will be of benefit to teaching staff					1		3	2	5	11											
This training will change working practices for the better					2	1	1	3	3	5											

Table 1.5: Views of respondents on the need for the training they will deliver and likely impact

Respondents provided a number of additional comments related to the need for the training they would be delivering and the likely impact:

- *There is a need for 'how' to effectively use TAs, but it is the 'how' they need not the historic 'why'.*
- *Staff may be resistant at first but will want to do the best for pupils they work with.*
- *As long as the training is tailored to the needs of the group it will improve working practices.*
- *Will be if Heads and SLT are driving it forward.*
- *The way this is delivered will be crucial in effecting positive attitudes for change.*
- *Although this is a difficult subject to tackle, the facts show we need to change and this is a viable and realistic place to start.*
- *It will cause controversy, as teacher may feel criticised!*
- *As has been said today – it will be hard – but worth it!*
- *I think there will be a mixed reaction to the materials.*
- *I believe in the training and do feel that if done sensitively and carefully this must and needs to change working practices for the better. Although outcomes for SEN children are improving all the time, I'm sure there are still many teachers and schools who need to have a shift of attitude away from the idea that SEN children should be with a TA.*
- *The specific training would be better aimed at Senior Leaders; they need to sign up to the changes that need to be made first. Teaching staff don't need to be bombarded by data, just a summary and then focus on how to use TAs better.*

A number of these comments would endorse the interpretation of numerical data in Table 1.5 that a need for this training does not necessarily equate with teachers or schools welcoming it. Respondents anticipated a number of key challenges. These are separated into two themes below:

Challenges related to own practice as trainer

- *To ensure we are meeting the needs of all those present.*
- *Being thoroughly prepared and being able to answer unexpected questions.*
- *Dealing with my lack of confidence in relating the data and answering difficult questions.*
- *The delivery of materials to engage staff to take on board the message.*
- *Keeping teachers enthused and providing practical guidance.*
- *Explaining the findings.*
- *Challenging assumptions and moving forward positively.*
- *Not to be shot after delivering the message.*
- *Having specific practices/strategies that definitely work. Backed up by data on success.*

Challenges related to the response of the teachers/school to the training

- *Teachers' problems with workloads, they will be a little resistant to any 'extra' work.*
- *Teachers' fear of extra work and feeling to blame.*
- *Teachers feeling they are to blame. The length of the training session. Number of slides – format of training approach. Headspace to take it on board.*
- *Teachers' attitudes.*
- *Staff don't like change. Personal upset/not seeing bigger picture.*
- *Controversial, teachers feeling criticised, and 'if it ain't broke don't fix it' mentality, perhaps..!*

- *Resistance – misinterpretation of what needs to change, fear!*
- *Working with teachers who find messages about change difficult to digest*
- *Convincing head teachers and class teachers that they alone should be responsible for the SEN children. I would be interested to know how this idea about TAs sits with many Head teachers ideas of employing cover supervisors and HLTAs to teach classes of children.*
- *People will latch on to the statistics rather than improving outcomes.*
- *People having to work at their own practice and be critical.*

Future support required from Mencap

There was not a strong sense that the respondents felt they needed any further information from Mencap prior to delivering the INSET to schools. 68.2% (15) stated they did not need additional information. Of the rest, 13.6% (3) said 'maybe' and 9.1% said 'No'.

Respondents who said that there was some additional information they would like from Mencap prior to delivering this INSET to teachers were invited to state what this would be. This question attracted four responses:

- *Ongoing advice and literature. A chance to come back and feedback/share ideas that were positive.*
- *May need to be reminded of some of the research but hopefully I will find it in the book.*
- *At present, I don't think so – will need to review my notes!*
- *The autonomy to deliver the training in a way that I know will get the desired outcomes. This means less data focus and more practical solutions.*

Only two of the responses relate to additional information Mencap might be able to provide. Of the other two responses, one indicates that nothing additional could immediately be identified, while the other reflects a concern that the content is not practical enough. Whilst not diminishing the significance for the individuals who will still need to go out and deliver this training, for Mencap it does not raise the same concern as a cluster of concerns on this theme expressed by a more sizeable minority might.

Though there was minimal need expressed for further support from Mencap, 45.5% (10) of the respondents indicated that there was additional information they planned to acquire themselves prior to delivering the INSET to teachers. Of the rest, 22.7% (5) said 'No' and 13.6% (3) said 'Maybe'. Respondents who said that there was some additional information they planned to acquire themselves prior to delivering this INSET to teachers were invited to state what this would be. This question attracted a range of responses:

- *Case studies from local outstanding schools to show successful use of TAs and evidence of impact (to create more up to date data/ideas).*
- *I'll develop some activities for participants to do to break up the slides e.g. role play to demonstrate how difficult it is for a TA to follow teacher instructions precisely or confusing messages to a pupils.*
- *I plan to make it a priority in my classroom for the rest of the term.*
- *Look at website and book.*

- *Further reading linked to research.*
- *About alternative and creative use of TAs – what have others done and has it been proven.*
- *Read the book!*
- *Read book! Consolidate knowledge.*
- *Look at the book!*
- *Read MITA more thoroughly!*
- *Some further research into effective questioning techniques.*
- *Will read info on reading list.*

Summary Discussion

The data gathered would suggest that the training for those providing training for schools had achieved its aims. Views expressed were broadly positive regarding the content of the training received and there was an acceptance of the need for this INSET in schools. The trainers were able to identify clear benefits both for institutions and in terms of improved outcomes for children. Some trainers' responses acknowledged the possibility that though the training was valuable and needed by schools this did not necessarily equate to schools recognising this need or being receptive to some of the messages from the research on TA deployment.

There were some reservations from some of the trainers regarding what they perceived to be too much didactic delivery and not enough variety and interaction within the training they received. A related issue was the suggestion that, in delivering the INSET in schools, there would be a need to enhance it to ensure it was relevant in terms of being both up to date and applicable in context of the geographical area where it was being delivered. As one particular trainer noted, any enhancements of the INSET would still need to retain the key messages and maintain the focus on the intended outcomes of the Inspired Educators project.

The teaching experience of those trained as trainers is likely to be a factor in achieving credibility in those schools receiving the INSET. Most of the trainers had many years' experience. It should be recognised, however, that whilst this credibility associated with being a practitioner is important it does not necessarily equate with being an effective trainer. Most of the trainers had experience of delivering training to colleagues within their own schools but fewer had delivered training beyond this. Responses suggested that individuals had varying degrees of confidence in aspects of their role as trainers as part of the Inspired Educators project and this may, in part, reflect their own individual starting points in terms of their experience in a trainer role. An area for consideration might be whether there is additional input that would be beneficial in relation to being a trainer for those with less experience or confidence in this area.

The training provided for trainers appears to have been successful in developing the trainers' knowledge and understanding of the aims and objectives of the INSET they would be delivering, Mencap's reasons for developing the project and the research behind Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA).

Chapter 2 Head teacher and SENCO seminars

Key Points

- Approximately half of the attendees were SENCOs. Head teachers represented only approximately a quarter of those attending the seminars. Other senior leadership team roles were represented
- The main reason for attending the seminar was to improve the effective use of TAs
- The majority of attendees reported positively on the trainers' knowledge and presentation skills (55.8% excellent, 24.3% very good, 11.2% good, 1.1% satisfactory)
- The majority of attendees reported positively on the extent to which the seminar objectives were met (46.4% excellent, 32.2% very good, 13.5% good, 1.5% satisfactory)
- The majority of attendees reported positively on the quality of the materials (37.1% excellent, 34.8% very good, 17.2% good, 3.4% satisfactory)
- Only 38% of respondents felt that TAs had sufficient skills and knowledge in relation to the national curriculum
- Less than half (45.5%) of respondents felt teachers understood the role of the TA. Only about a third (32.5%) of respondents felt the role of TAs was understood by parents
- The data indicates that the seminars were successful in developing attendees' knowledge and understanding in relation to learning disability, SEN and inclusion, Mencap's rationale for the Inspired Educators project and the effective use of TAs to support/work with pupils with SEN
- There are clear indications from the data that those attending the seminars were caused to re-appraise their views of current practice in relation to forms of TA deployment, the time devoted to particular TA activities and the effectiveness of these
- After the seminars many respondents indicated that they needed to develop practice in relation to communication and TA preparedness, with a high proportion (80.9%) of attendees indicated that they intended to develop an action plan
- Though 44.6% of attendees indicated that they would send teachers on the Inspired Educators training available via the Teaching Schools, 40.1% were not sure.

Introduction

The head teacher and SENCO seminars represented the first stage of the Inspired Educators project's work with schools. In partnership with the research team behind the Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS) Project, Mencap developed and delivered seminars in nine different locations:

03/10/13	Swiss Cottage teaching School
29/10/13	Forest Way School
13/11/13	Fiveways School (The Partnership Teaching School)
19/11/13	Notre Dame High School
21/11/13	The Loyne Specialist School
25/11/13	Town End Academy
28/01/14	Swiss Cottage teaching School
03/02/14	Fiveways School (The Partnership Teaching School)
24/02/14	Fosseway Schools (The Partnership Teaching School)

These sessions exposed head teachers, other school leaders and SENCOs to the findings from the research and explored strategies intended to maximise the effectiveness of TAs in their schools. The intention was that the senior staff attending the seminars should lead developments within their own schools. It was hoped that those schools represented would also access INSET from the trainers attached to the local Teaching School involved in the Inspired Educators project.

As previously noted, there were 277 pre session questionnaires completed and 267 post seminar questionnaires. Within this chapter of the report percentages are compared to provide a broad indication of changes in opinion but it should be recognised that some change could simply be due to individuals who expressed a particular view in the pre seminar questionnaire not completing the post seminar questionnaire or missing out questions. In practice it is unlikely to be just respondents with one particular view expressed in the pre seminar questionnaire who did not complete the post seminar questionnaire or omitted questions. Changes in the broad proportions expressing particular viewpoints can be assumed to be reasonably accurate.

Details of those attending the seminars

Table 2.1 shows the completed questionnaires those attending particular seminars contributed to the overall total received. Examination of the figures shows that the reduction from 277 pre seminar questionnaires to 267 post seminar questionnaires difference was not simply due to 10 of the original respondents not completing the second questionnaire. In some cases the post seminar questionnaire figure is less and may be due to people choosing not to complete it, not staying to the end of the seminar or not attending at all. In some cases the post seminar questionnaire figure is more and is likely to be due to people not receiving joining instructions or fully acting on them. In addition some respondents did report problems accessing materials through the links provided for the pre seminar questionnaire, whereas the post seminar questionnaires were primarily delivered as paper copies.

Approximately half of the attendees who completed the questionnaires were SENCOs, a quarter were head teachers and approximately a fifth identified themselves as other (see Table 2.2). Appendix 15 and Appendix 16 provide details of the range of roles respondents listed under the category of 'other'. Some respondents had more than one role.

Date	Location	% (N)	
		Pre	Post
03.10.13	Swiss Cottage School	11.2% (31)	7.9% (21)
29.10.13	Forest Way School	10.8% (30)	13.1% (35)
13.11.13	Fiveways School (The Partnership Teaching School)	17.7% (49)	16.9% (45)
19.11.13	Notre Dame High School	11.9% (33)	11.6% (31)
21.11.13	The Loyne Specialist School	6.9% (19)	8.2% (22)
25.11.13	Town End Academy	9.4% (26)	8.6% (23)
24.02.14	Fosseway (The Partnership Teaching School)	8.7% (24)	11.2% (30)
3.02.14	Fiveways School (The Partnership Teaching School)	11.2% (31)	14.2% (38)
28.01.14	Swiss Cottage School	5.4% (15)	8.2% (22)

Table 2.1: Distribution of responses to the pre and post seminar questionnaires according to the seminar attended

Role	Pre Seminar Questionnaire	Post Seminar Questionnaire
SENCO	53.4% (148)	49.4% (132)
Head teacher	23.5% (65)	25.5% (68)
Other (please specify)	22.0% (61)	23.2% (62)
Missing/not stated	1.1% (3)	1.8% (5)

Table 2.2: Role held by those attending head Teacher and SENCO seminars

An issue the data in Table 2.2 highlights is the relatively low percentage of head teachers attending the seminars. A premise underpinning the Inspired Educators project was the need for senior leadership team engagement in order to encourage institutional development in terms of changes in attitudes and practice. Closer examination of the responses provided in the 'other' category (see Appendix 15 and Appendix 16) demonstrates that there were other senior leadership roles represented and so these statistics are not necessarily an indicator that the project failed to reach its target audience. It should also be recognised that there has been increasing encouragement in official documents from the 2001 SEN Code of Practice (DfES 2001b) onwards for the SENCO role to be seen as a senior leadership position with strategic responsibilities. The level of influence the SENCO has over organisational change is likely to depend on the extent to which their school accepts this view of the SENCO role.

In the pre seminar questionnaire just under a third (31.0%) of respondents indicated that they held a qualification in relation to SEN. Just over a fifth of all respondents held the National Award for SEN Coordination or were currently undertaking it. Many held this along with other qualifications. In addition many other qualifications identified by participants were held by just one person. As a mandatory award for SENCOs new to post it is not surprising that amongst a group of participants containing a large percentage of SENCOs this qualification dominated.

The schools represented varied considerably in size (see Table 2.3) but the largest proportion (23.8%) of respondents came from schools employing between 11 and 20 teachers. A sizeable proportion (12.3%) of respondents came from schools employing over 50 teachers. The full set of responses is included in Appendix 17.

Over half the schools represented at the seminars employed between 6 and 15 TAs. Over half also indicated that they employed 6 -15 TAs specifically in a role working with or supporting pupils with SEN.

The question referring to TAs employed to work with/support pupils with SEN may have been problematic as, even allowing for the fact that some respondents are always likely to miss out questions, the percentage completing this question was considerably less than 100% (See Table 2.3). The most likely explanations are that respondents were concerned about effectively ‘double counting’ and so were confused in how to record if only part of the TA’s role was working with pupils with SEN or they only employed TAs to work with/support pupils with SEN. The purpose of this question was only to highlight to respondents that not all TAs are necessarily employed to work with/support pupils with SEN in order to cue them into the focus of the remaining questions. Consequently any misinterpretation that may have occurred is not problematic.

Teachers employed		TAs employed		TAs employed working/ supporting SEN	
Number Employed	% of respondents	Number Employed	% of respondents	Number employed	% of respondents
1 – 5	4.7% (13)	1 -5	14 (5.1%)	1-5	10.1% (28)
6 - 10	17.7% (49)	6 – 10	24.1% (69)	6 - 10	24.9% (69)
11 -20	23.8% (66)	11 – 15	17.3% (48)	11 -15	16.2% (45)
21-30	7.9% (22)	16 - 20	11.2% (31)	16 – 20	6.9% (19)
41 -50	3.2% (9)	21 - 30	9.4% (26)	21 -30	7.6% (21)
51+	12.3% (34)	31+	5.8% (16)	31+	4.0% (11)

Table 2.3: Profile of the schools represented (from pre seminar questionnaire).

Reasons for attending the seminar

By far the most popular reason for attending the seminar was a desire to improve the effective use of TAs. This was given as one of their top three reasons for attending by 187 of the respondents in the first questionnaire. It was also given the highest mean rank (1.3). The responses in relation to other reasons for attending are shown in Table 2.4. Other top three reasons besides those available within the questionnaire were provided by 12 respondents (see Appendix 18).

Reason for Attending the Seminar	Mean Rank	No. rated it 1-3
It is an objective on our school development plan	2.4	51
It was an opportunity to hear Mencap’s perspective on the effective use of TAs	2.2	75
Growing number of children with SEN	2.4	63
Wish to improve the effective use of TAs	1.3	187
Part of our staff development and appraisal system	2.4	65
To address an issue raised by Ofsted in our school	2.2	18
Considering rationalising the number of TAs in our school	2.8	29
Develop my own expertise in this area	2.5	84

Table 2.4: Reasons for Attending the Seminar

Views on the seminar

The majority of respondents were very positive about the organisational arrangements for registering for the seminars and the pre seminar information provided (see Table 2.5).

Pre Seminar Organisation	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Information about the aims of the seminar	26.2% (70)	38.6% (103)	22.5% (60)	6.0% (16)	-
Information about location and time of the seminar	33.3% (89)	32.2% (86)	20.2% (54)	5.2% (14)	1.1% (3)
Registering for the seminar	30.0% (80)	36.3% (97)	16.5% (44)	6.7% (18)	1.5% (4)

Table 2.5: Views on the pre seminar organisation

A small number of respondents gave 'poor' ratings in relation to *Information about location and time of the seminar* and *Registering for the seminar*. This would seem to indicate individual problems encountered (specifically activating the links and being given timely information) rather than any weaknesses at a systemic level with the pre-seminar arrangements.

The seminars were well received by the vast majority of respondents (see Table 2.6).

Area	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
The extent to which the seminar objectives were met?	46.4% (124)	32.2% (86)	13.5% (36)	1.5% (4)	-
The tutor's knowledge and presentation skills	55.8% (149)	24.3% (65)	11.2% (30)	1.1% (3)	-
Effectiveness of the methods of presentation/teaching methods used	36.3% (97)	36.0% (9)	17.6% (47)	2.6% (7)	-
The quality of the materials	37.1% (99)	34.8% (93)	17.2% (46)	3.4% (9)	-

Table 2.6: Respondents' views on the seminar

Respondents were asked to indicate on 1 -10 scale the extent (1 – Not at all, 10 Fully) to which the input during the seminar had developed their knowledge and understanding in a number of key areas relevant to the Inspired Educators project. This question also received positive responses (see Table 2.7)

Area of knowledge and understanding	Mean rating
Understand learning disability and why Mencap are delivering this project.	8.2
Understand the research behind Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA)	8.7
Have acquired more knowledge about SEN and inclusion	7.2
Have acquired more knowledge about the effective use of TAs to support/work with pupils with SEN	8.2

Table 2.7: Views of respondents on the contribution to their knowledge and understanding

Viewed collectively tables 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 provide a very positive and encouraging picture for Mencap and those directly involved in delivering the training. A number of respondents provided additional comments regarding the seminars. These were almost all positive. They are presented below together with the small number of comments that could be classified as either neutral or developmental. None were directly critical of the training as a whole. The language used within the additional positive comments conveys a high level of appreciation for the input received.

Positive Comments

- *A fantastic session. Very thought provoking, Thank you!*
- *A very useful session thank you.*
- *A great spring board to moving work with TAs forward. Raised issues of needing a TA policy and JDs.*
- *Absolutely fascinating, thought-provoking. This will really impact on how we deploy TAs in our school. Thank you.*
- *Brilliant seminar. Opened a can of worms! Lots of questions- not sure yet about the answers.*
- *Concrete examples to take away are very valuable so you can have a quick impact.*
- *Thank you, very thought provoking. Have probed future considerations in the light of research findings'*
- *Excellent seminar, thank you.*
- *Excellent seminar. Lots of very useful and thought provoking discussion. Great to hear Richard's input at the start.*
- *Excellent session, definite food for thoughts. Delivered in an excellent and engaging way. Thanks!*
- *Excellent session, well received and very useful. It will change practice.*
- *Extremely useful session, Thank you.*
- *Great, thank you. I have very clear things to move forward with now and they are manageable!*
- *This has been very informative and thought provoking, thanks.*
- *I am amazed (and relieved) that the issues I have in my school are so common! How to improve has been made to seem simple and straightforward!! Let's hope it proves to be the case!!*
- *I was left with more questions than answers but spurred on to look at the role of TAs starting with an audit of our current practice/viewpoint of staff. Very thought provoking.*
- *I would like all SENCOs in Somerset to have this information.*

- *Many thanks to MENCAP. Great research.*
- *Many thanks- very useful!*
- *Our statemented children make outstanding progress as a result of the excellent TA support they receive, but sometimes at the expense of the teacher so this seminar has prompted me to reflect more deeply on how we will enhance the role of the teacher and TA.*
- *Presenter was engaging and did not shy away from saying the unsayable because it does need to be said (if that makes sense!).*
- *Really useful seminar-thank you.*
- *Some very thought provoking ideas and suggestions, which require big but difficult changes. Thank you.*
- *Thank you for a very informative and thought provoking afternoon.*
- *Thank you for providing this vital training/information/awareness-raising session. It has had a personal and professional impact on me.*
- *Thank you this has been very thought provoking and has made it clear where we need to go next - thanks*
- *Thank you to all the team for their hard work and commitment!!!*
- *Thank you to Richard, it was inspiring to hear your experiences.*
- *Thank you, look forward to reviewing our practice.*
- *Thank you, very good.*
- *Thanks for the informative, thought-provoking session and the free book!*
- *Thank you, look forward to reviewing our practice.*
- *This was most useful and inspiring. A timely seminar as my school is in the process of reviewing use of TAs.*
- *Thought provoking about organisation of TAs. Made me think 'out of the box'*
- *Very encouraging and challenging. Thank you.*
- *Valuable seminar and the work Mencap do.*
- *Very good thank you. plan provoked lots of discussion and ideas for classroom.*
- *Very interested in receiving/delivering INSET in this research at our school in the new year! The seminar was well delivered and very clear and informative it has backed up our own research and proposed developments.*
- *Very relevant, current and thought provoking.*
- *Very useful-questions current practice and motivation for improvement.*
- *Very thought provoking. although mainstream focussed we can interpret and develop this in a special school setting.*
- *Very useful-questions current practice and motivation for improvement.*
- *We will contact MENCAP to run an 'inspire me' course again.*

Neutral and Developmental Comments

- *Did not receive information prior to the seminar.*
- *I read the book before attending as I had the intention of reviewing how we work with TAs- this will impact my responses in this questionnaire.*
- *It would be helpful to have concrete examples e.g. question cards. Refreshing that training is coming from sources other than educational.*
- *It would have been helpful to have hand-outs of the slides to annotate as we went along.*
- *It would be great to provide teachers & TAs with training around specific areas of development highlighted by this session.*
- *More group discussion time would have been useful. The presentations were*

- very useful, but discussion time with colleagues was too limited.*
- *Not sure it addressed entirely the differences in support required for those with highly complex needs whose independence may be better developed in specialist provision, but whose parents particularly want to keep them in mainstream.*
 - *Raises some interesting points to think about- shame first half had a very negative feel. TAs do fab jobs too.*
 - *Some more specific examples of things/ways TAs could be more effective in class would have been helpful (as opposed to systemic issues), although these may be in the book! Thank you!*
 - *Time and money is a major limiting factor but will endeavour to find ways around these problem.*
 - *Very interesting (depressing) but not really relevant to my setting.*
 - *Very informative. As always for SEN staff & teachers, the requirements in order will involve more time. It can't be just a matter of working smarter. Most teachers are already working as smart as they can.*
 - *Wasn't clear how to send teachers to the INSET as part of the Inspired Educators Project.*

In terms of their key purpose of equipping heads and SENCOs with the knowledge, understanding and motivation to return to their schools and initiate a process of change the data within Tables 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 and the additional comments would suggest the seminars were successful. Within the neutral and developmental comments there is a hint that some individuals interpreted the input as implying a lack of appreciation for the job that TAs do or the time and financial implications of adopting different approaches. Others touched on issues related to the delivery and structure of the session.

General views on the TA role

Data gathered in the pre seminar questionnaire (see Table 2.8) indicated a generally positive view of TAs within schools, with 65% agreeing that TAs were a valuable asset.

In terms of an indication of the areas in most need of development the statements *TAs have sufficient skills & knowledge in relation to the national curriculum* and *The role of TAs is understood by parents* attracted the lowest level of combined 'agree' and 'strongly agree' responses. Though more respondents indicated agreement than disagreement, it is worthy of note that only 45.5% felt able to record a response of agree or strongly agree in relation to the statement *The role of TAs is understood by teachers*. The perception by many that parents did not understand the role of TA can be interpreted in a number of ways. It may simply be reference to a general lack of understanding or the implication may be a misunderstanding in the sense of holding a particular belief about the role of the TA that was at odds with the way the school was deploying its TAs. Whatever the interpretation, the implication is that in taking forward changes based on the input from the seminars schools need to consider how they keep parents informed so that the reasons for new ways of working are understood.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
TAs are a valuable asset	-	0.4% (1)	4.0% (11)	25.3% (70)	39.7% (110)
TAs represent good value for money	0.4% (1)	4.0% (11)	8.3% (23)	30.7% (85)	25.6% (71)
TAs have sufficient skills & knowledge in relation to the national curriculum	0.4% (1)	17.0% (47)	12.3% (34)	32.5% (90)	6.5% (18)
TAs are most effective when directed/supported by a qualified teacher	0.4% (1)	2.9% (8)	4.0% (11)	37.5% (104)	24.5% (68)
TAs are well liked by pupils	0.4% (1)	0.4% (1)	1.8% (5)	28.2% (78)	39.0% (108)
The role of TAs is understood by teachers	0.4% (1)	14.4% (40)	9.0% (25)	32.5% (90)	13.0% (36)
The role of TAs is understood by parents	0.4% (1)	19.1% (53)	15.9% (44)	28.2% (78)	4.3% (12)

Table 2.8: Responses from the pre seminar questionnaire on how TAs who work with/support pupils with SEN are regarded.

Views on current practice in the use of TAs

Respondents were asked a sequence of questions in the pre and post seminar questionnaires seeking their views on the role of those TAs employed by the school who routinely spend part or all of their time working with/supporting pupils with SEN.

As Table 2.9 indicates, the seminar appears to have highlighted for some that practice about which they previously felt reasonably confident pre seminar was in need of improvement. This suggestion needs to be viewed with a degree of caution because of the difference in the overall numbers responding to this question in the two questionnaires, but proportionally attendees appear marginally more reticent in selecting 'good' or 'outstanding'. The large increase in the proportion selecting 'Requires improvement', would also seem to support the view that the content of the seminar challenged views on the quality of existing practice.

View of Practice	Pre Seminar % (N)	Post Seminar % (N)
Outstanding:	4.7% (13)	3.4% (9)
Good:	53.1% (147)	49.1% (131)
Requires improvement:	13.4% (37)	37.5% (100)
Inadequate:	0.4% (1)	1.9% (5)

Table 2.9: Views on the quality of the school's practice pre and post seminar,

Perspectives on TA time devoted to specific activities

In the pre seminar questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate how TAs were typically used. The data generated is a useful indicator of how TAs were used in the schools who registered to attend the seminars prior to any influence from the project. The dominant usages were *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN*

and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*, with 65.4% and 65.3% of respondents respectively indicating that these were used (see Table 2.10).

Use of Teaching Assistants	Not Sure	Never used	Rarely used	Occasionally used	Often used
Administration (including training/meetings)	2.9% (8)	3.6% (10)	22.0% (61)	30.7% (85)	6.5% (18)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	0.7% (2)	0.7% (2)	4.3% (12)	18.8% (52)	46.6% (129)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	0.7% (2)	0.4% (1)	7.2% (20)	28.5% (79)	33.6% (93)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	0.4% (1)	0.4% (1)	4.7% (13)	19.5% (54)	45.8% (127)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	0.7% (2)	-	11.2% (31)	31.0% (86)	27.7% (74)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	0.7% (2)	2.2% (6)	10.8% (30)	29.6% (82)	34.7% (96)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	1.1% (3)	0.4% (1)	9.4% (26)	25.3% (70)	34.7% (96)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	1.1% (3)	5.1% (14)	15.5% (43)	33.2% (92)	13.7% (38)

Table 2.10: Usage of TAs by schools represented at the seminars (prior to seminar)

The implication is that TAs were used a lot in class but this was more frequently for general in class support and working with groups than working with specific individuals. With the exception of *Administration (including training/meetings)* and *Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)*, relatively high proportions of respondents indicated that the other forms of use listed were also 'often used'. This suggests that a diverse range of practice existed. What is impossible to tell is what factors schools' choices regarding modes of deployment are based upon.

The question regarding the usage of TAs (see Table 2.10) was accompanied within the pre seminar questionnaire by a question asking respondents views about the proportion of time devoted to each of the activities listed (see Table 2.11). Though there is a spread of responses, in relation to each activity the largest proportion indicated that the time devoted to each area of activity was 'about right'. It should be noted that this proportion was never more than 51% and in the case of five out of the eight listed activities was less than 50%. The implication is that a high proportion of the head teachers, SENCOs and others attending the seminars did not feel able to confidently conclude that the time their school devoted to particular activities was 'about right'. In relation to the aims of the Inspired Educators project, it indicates there is a need for this work through the implication that amongst a group consisting of many in senior leadership roles a substantial proportion feel a degree of insecurity about how they are using TAs as a resource.

Activity	Not sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	5.1% (14)	4.0% (11)	3.6% (1)	45.1% (125)	9.4% (26)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	3.2% (9)	0.4% (1)	12.6% (35)	46.2% (128)	9.0% (25)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	1.8% (5)	0.4% (1)	12.6% (35)	46.2% (128)	9.0% (25)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	3.2% (9)	0.7% (2)	11.2% (31)	45.5% (126)	9.4% (26)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	3.2% (9)	0.4% (1)	9.0% (25)	50.9% (141)	6.9% (19)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	3.6% (10)	1.1% (3)	6.9% (19)	50.5% (140)	8.3% (23)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	4.7% (13)	-	2.9% (8)	40.8% (113)	21.7% (60)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	3.4% (15)	5.8% (16)	3.6% (10)	50.9% (141)	3.6% (10)

Table 2.11 Respondents views PRIOR to the seminar on the TIME TAs spend on particular activities

In the post seminar questionnaire respondents were asked the same question as a means of gauging if, in the light of the input received, they still felt the time spent by TAs on these different activities was appropriate. A similar picture emerged with less than 50% of respondents feeling able to record a response of 'about right' in relation to five out the eight listed activities (see Table 2.12).

Use of Teaching Assistants	Not Sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	4.9% (13)	6.7% (18)	6.0% (16)	47.2% (126)	22.8% (61)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	1.9% (5)	0.7% (2)	35.2% (94)	45.7% (122)	37% (10)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	1.9% (5)	11.1% (3)	36.7% (98)	45.7% (122)	3.4% (9)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	3.4% (9)	0.4% (1)	29.2% (78)	44.2% (118)	11.6% (31)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	5.2% (14)	2.6% (7)	29.2% (78)	51.3% (137)	1.1% (3)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	6.4% (17)	6.0% (16)	31.1% (83)	43.1% (115)	3.0% (8)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	5.6% (15)	2.2% (6)	9.7% (26)	56.9% (152)	15.0% (40)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	4.9% (13)	9.4% (25)	9.7% (26)	57.7% (154)	6.4% (17)

Table 2.12: Respondents views AFTER the seminar on the TIME TAs spend on particular activities

The premise in designing this question and using it in the two questionnaires was that the input during the seminar would cause attendees to question the time they devoted to particular TA activities, potentially resulting in a decrease in the number of 'about right' responses and associated changes to the 'too little' and 'too much' responses as they reappraised their current practice. In practice, the changes to the 'About right' responses in five of the eight area of activity were not particularly great, showing a minor fluctuation of approximately 1 – 3% for most areas of activity. The more sizeable changes worthy of remark were:

- 57.7% indicating the time spent on *Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)* was 'about right' in the post seminar questionnaire compared to 50.9% in pre seminar questionnaire.
- 56.9% indicating the time spent on *Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN* was 'about right' in the post seminar questionnaire compared to 40.8% in pre seminar questionnaire.
- 43.1% indicating that time spent *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN out of class* was 'about right' in the post seminar questionnaire compared to 50.5% % in the pre seminar questionnaire.

The potentially more interesting change evident when comparing the pre seminar (Table 2.11) and post seminar data (Table 2.12) is in the higher proportion in the latter recording responses of 'Too much' for most areas of TA activity. The implication is that the content of the seminar raised some questions for attendees regarding their current use of TAs. Of particular note were four areas of activity where the group view on whether 'Too much' time was spent on them increased by between 20 and 30%:

- In the pre seminar questionnaire 12.6% of respondents felt too much time was devoted to *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN*, compared with 35.4% in the post seminar questionnaire. An interesting additional point to note is that in the pre seminar questionnaire just under half of respondents (46.6%) had said that TAs were often used in this way (see Table 2.10).
- In the pre seminar questionnaire 12.6% of respondents felt too much time was devoted to *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class*, compared to 36.7% in the post seminar questionnaire. An interesting additional point to note is that in the pre seminar questionnaire a third of respondents (33.6%) had said that TAs were often used in this way (see Table 2.10).
- In the pre seminar questionnaire 9.0% felt too much time was devoted to *Supporting/ working with groups of children with SEN out of class* compared with 31.1% in the post seminar questionnaire. An interesting additional point to note is that in the pre seminar questionnaire around a third of respondents (34.7%) had said that TAs were often used in this way (see Table 2.10).

- In the pre seminar questionnaire 6.9% felt too much time was devoted to *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN out of class* compared to 29.2% in the post seminar questionnaire. An interesting additional point to note is that in the pre seminar questionnaire almost a third of respondents (27.7%) had said that TAs were often used in this way (see Table 2.10).

The implication of the four preceding bullet points is that TAs were often being used to undertake activities that, post seminar, many respondents felt too much time was devoted to.

Though less of a change in opinion (18.0%), in the pre seminar questionnaire, 11.2% of respondents felt too much time was devoted to *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class* compared to 29.2% in the post seminar questionnaire. This is noteworthy due to the fact that this was the form of support the highest proportion of respondents indicated was used 'often used' (see Table 2.10).

There were four TA activities where the number of respondents indicating 'too little' time was spent on them increased. These were *Administration (including training/meetings)* (from 9.4% to 22.8%), *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN* (from 9.0% to 37%), *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class* (from 9.4% to 11.6%) and *Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)* (3.6% to 6.4%). In some cases the numbers were small and it should be noted that the sample sizes were slightly different which may have affected this.

The changes in view regarding *Administration (including training/meetings)* is worthy of note. It is possible that respondents were interpreting the element of the statement in parentheses as teacher and TA liaison time. As such this would reflect a key message from the seminar regarding TA preparedness. This might explain why after the seminar more respondents felt not enough time was devoted to this.

In terms of the impact of this phase of the Inspired Educators project, the data presented in Tables 2.11 and 2.12 suggests there was a reappraisal of practice taking place that is likely to be attributable to the input from the seminar. There were evidently attendees who reconsidered their current practice and recorded a different response in the post seminar questionnaire. This suggests there is the recognition of an aspect of practice in need of development that is the necessary precursor to action planning and subsequent organisational and behavioural change.

Perspectives on the effectiveness of specific activities

Perceptions of the effectiveness of different forms of TA use were explored in the pre seminar questionnaire (see Table 2.13) and the post seminar questionnaire (see Table 2.14)

Activity	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	4.7% (13)	2.9% (8)	8.7% (24)	41.2% (114)	10.8% (30)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	0.4% (1)	2.2% (6)	2.9% (8)	47.7% (132)	16.6% (46)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	-	0.7% (2)	3.6% (10)	39.4% (109)	26.6% (71)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	0.4% (1)	2.2% (6)	5.1% (14)	47.3% (131)	13.2% (42)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	0.4% (1)	0.4% (1)	5.8% (16)	39.7% (110)	22.4% (62)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	2.2% (6)	3.6% (10)	6.1% (17)	42.6% (118)	15.5% (43)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	-	3.6% (10)	5.1% (14)	34.3% (95)	27.1% (75)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	4.0% (11)	1.8% (5)	8.3% (23)	32.5% (90)	21.3% (59)

Table 2.13: Respondents views PRIOR to the seminar on the EFFECTIVENESS of TA use in relation to particular activities

Activity	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	5.2% (14)	12.0% (32)	14.6% (39)	47.9% (128)	9.0% (24)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	-	13.6% (36)	10.5% (28)	58.1% (155)	6.7% (18)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	0.7% (2)	14.6% (39)	10.9% (29)	53.6% (143)	9.7% (26)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	1.1% (3)	10.5% (28)	13.9% (37)	59.2% (158)	4.9% (13)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	1.5% (4)	10.9% (29)	17.6% (47)	46.1% (123)	13.1% (35)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	4.9% (13)	9.7% (26)	20.2% (54)	43.1% (115)	11.2% (30)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	2.6% (7)	8.6% (23)	13.1% (35)	43.8% (117)	21.0% (56)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	9.7% (26)	3.7% (10)	14.6% (39)	39.7% (106)	20.6% (55)

Table 2.14: Respondents views AFTER the seminar on the EFFECTIVENESS of TA use in relation to particular activities

In relation to all activities there was a small drop in the percentage of respondents believing their practice to be 'very effective'. The largest drop (16.9%) was in relation to *Supporting/ working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class*. To give a rating of 'very effective' is likely to require an individual respondent to feel very secure in their practice. The highest number of 'very effective' ratings in the pre seminar questionnaire was for *Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN*. This only represented just under a third of respondents (27.1%). The greater security in relation to this area may be because if entry and exit data is used well it is easier to evidence impact. In the post seminar questionnaire *Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN* also received the most 'very effective' ratings but had dropped to 21.0%.

In the context of a seminar aimed at senior leaders, the proportion of 'not sure' response is an important consideration. With the emphasis on school self-evaluation, the expectation would be that senior leaders *do* know whether or not their schools practice is effective. The increase in 'Not sure' responses is further evidence that the input during the seminar has increased doubt regarding existing practice. The decrease in respondents selecting the 'very effective' option and the increases in 'Somewhat effective' and 'Ineffective' responses recorded would seem to be a further indication of a reappraisal of current practice by a sizeable proportion of attendees.

The encouraging message for Mencap from the comparison in Tables 2.13 and 2.14 and 3.14 is that the relatively large number of respondents doubting the effectiveness of each of the areas of activity means that the Inspired Educators project is timely and fulfils a need for more guidance on developing effective practice. The scene was therefore set for developments in practice supported by the training to be provided for teachers through the Teaching Schools.

The views expressed in relation to effectiveness can also be compared with views on the time devoted to these. Despite 46.6% of respondents indicating *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN* was a mode of deployment 'often used' only 16.6% of respondents in pre seminar questionnaire felt it was 'very effective'. This percentage dropped to just 6.7% in the post seminar questionnaire, suggesting that the input received had led to further questioning of the effectiveness of this practice. A similar issue emerged with *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*. Though 45.8% said TAs were often used in this way only 26.6% felt it was a 'very effective' mode of deployment. This then dropped to 9.7% in post seminar questionnaire.

In relation to the effectiveness of TAs, some head teachers and SENCOs also provide some qualitative comments after attending the seminar (see Appendix 19). A number of these refer to work already underway or planned developments. Two comments ('again, depends on the individual' and 'varies depending on TA, some excellent, some need more training') provide a reminder that effectiveness can be judged at the general level of whether a particular mode of deployment is effective but also in the more specific terms of whether when deployed in this way the particular personnel in school are effective. The limitation of a questionnaire is

always that it is impossible to know how the individual respondent is interpreting the question and responses may well have been mixture of the general and the specific. Within the responses to the post INSET questionnaire for teachers (see Chapter 3) there were also a number of additional comments provided related to the point that the effectiveness of the mode of deployment was influenced by the individual TA deployed in this way.

Perspectives on communication between Teachers and TAs

A key focus of the Inspired Educators project is improving the preparedness of TAs to work effectively with pupils with special educational needs. This relies on good communication between teachers and TAs to ensure there is a shared understanding of support required and robust mechanisms for dialogue regarding pupils' learning. In the pre seminar questionnaires (see Table 2.15) respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a number of statements related to communication between teachers and TAs.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers are able to work with/manage TAs effectively	2.2% (6)	13.0% (36)	7.2% (20)	43.0% (119)	4.3% (12)
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom	1.8% (5)	14.8% (41)	6.5% (18)	40.8% (113)	5.4% (15)
Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs	0.4% (1)	35.7% (99)	5.4% (15)	25.3% (70)	2.5% (7)
Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms	1.1% (3)	36.1% (100)	6.9% (19)	21.7% (60)	4.0% (11)
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom	2.5% (7)	15.5% (43)	5.4% (15)	41.2% (114)	5.1% (14)
Teachers receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions	0.4% (1)	29.2% (81)	9.4% (26)	28.9% (80)	1.8% (5)
Communication between teachers and TAs is good	2.2% (6)	15.2% (42)	6.9% (19)	38.6% (107)	5.4% (15)

Table 2.15: Views from the pre seminar questionnaire on communication between TAs and Teachers

The highest proportion of respondents indicating a level of agreement with any statement was 47.3% (for *Teachers are able to work with/manage TAs effectively*). The other statements a large proportion of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with were:

- TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom (46.3%).
- TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom (46.2%).
- Communication between teachers and TAs is good (44.0%).

Though a large proportion indicated a level of agreement with these statements, it is important to recognise that in all cases this was still less than half of those who could have responded to this question. A lot (approximately 30%) of respondents did not answer it, which may have been because it was towards the end of the questionnaire. It is therefore important to view the percentages expressing agreement only in the context of those who completed this question but recorded a response of 'not sure', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree':

- 22.4% recorded an answer of 'don't know', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' in response to the statement *Teachers are able to work with/manage TAs effectively*
- 23.4% recorded an answer of 'don't know', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' in response to the statement *TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom*
- 23.1% recorded an answer of 'don't know', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' in response to the statement *TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom*
- 24.3% recorded an answer of 'don't know', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' in response to the statement *Communication between teachers and TAs is good.*

There were some items where the strength of disagreement is worthy of note. The statements *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs* and *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms* were disagreed or strongly disagreed with by 36.1% and 37.2% respectively of respondents. The interesting characteristic of these two statements is that in focusing on 'opportunities' they carry more of a timetabling implication than some of the others.

The post seminar questionnaire re-visited these statements but asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the suggestion that these were areas in which the school needed to develop its practice (see Table 2.16).

The overwhelming view was that all areas were in need of development. For most of the statements the combined 'agree' and 'strongly agree' ratings exceeded 80%. The lowest level of agreement was in relation to how well TAs are informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom but even for this one 66.7% either agreed or strongly agreed.

A number of those attending the head teacher and SENCO seminars also provided some additional qualitative comments regarding areas they perceived needed development in relation to TAs in their school. In some case these were simply

statements indicating satisfaction with current practice. The type of comments varied from affirmations regarding the quality of current practice (*'All teachers and TAs have a good working relationship and the TAs understand what they are required to do'*) to identification of the source of weaknesses recognised (eg *'Many inexperienced teachers has impacted on consistency'*) and general expressions of an intention to improve (*'Listening today I feel we are doing reasonably but there is always room to improve'*). The full set of comments are shown in Appendix 20. These types of comments demonstrate that the content of the seminar had affected individuals in different ways and a major determining factor is likely to be the school's stage of development. For the individual who commented positively on their own school this may have been an accurate appraisal and the seminar's value may have been to confirm this. It is, of course, also possible that this individual was demonstrating a degree of complacency regarding the quality of practice. These two points will always pose a challenge for any training intended to stimulate change. There will inevitably be individuals representing schools at different stages of development so the degree of change they need to make may be different and there will potentially be individuals present who are less receptive than others to messages that challenge existing practice.

We need to develop our practice in relation to:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers' ability to work with/manage TAs effectively	0.4% (1)	4.1% (11)	3.0% (8)	52.8% (141)	30.3% (81)
How well TAs are informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom	1.9% (5)	3.0% (8)	3.7% (10)	52.1% (139)	30.3% (81)
The opportunities teachers have to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs	1.9% (5)	5.6% (15)	4.1% (11)	46.4% (124)	33.7% (90)
The opportunities teachers have to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms	0.4% (1)	4.1% (11)	3.7% (10)	45.7% (122)	37.5% (100)
How well TAs are informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom	2.2% (6)	11.6% (31)	9.7% (26)	43.1% (115)	23.6% (63)
The feedback teachers receive from TA led interventions	1.1% (3)	5.6% (15)	6.7% (18)	48.7% (130)	28.5% (76)
The quality of communication between teachers and TAs	2.2% (6)	7.1% (19)	8.6% (23)	50.6% (135)	22.8% (61)
Teachers understanding of effective methods of utilising TAs to support/work with pupils with SEN	1.1% (3)	4.1% (11)	7.5% (20)	47.6% (127)	31.5% (84)

Table 2.16: Views from the post seminar questionnaire on areas related to communication between TAs and Teachers that need to be developed

Future plans for engagement with the project

At the end of the post seminar questionnaire respondents were asked whether they intended to develop an action plan in response to issues raised by input. Within the Inspired Educators project this was an important step in moving from post training reactions to behavioural changes and organisational impact (Kirkpatrick 1967).

Encouragingly, 80.9% indicated that they would be developing an action plan and 6.0% indicated that TA use was already part of their school improvement plan (or other action plan). Only 2.2% indicated that they would not be because there were no significant areas for development for them in relation to the use of TAs.

When asked to provide qualitative comments in relation to any 'other' future actions they intend to take, a number provided more detail. The comments are shown below:

- *A review planned of TAs in class and an audit of support to feed into school development plan.*
- *Action plan already in place, following NASEN conference, Rob Webster's session and purchasing book!*
- *Again would need to talk to head teacher.*
- *Action plan already drawn up/in place.*
- *An action plan isn't necessary but an audit of TAs and teachers will be useful to do.*
- *Decision to be made after feedback/discussion with head.*
- *Include in school improvement plan. focus on mentoring TAs.*
- *Need to discuss with SMT.*
- *Not an action plan as such, but a small number of areas that need to be discussed and developed.*
- *More work as an SLT to improve current practice.*
- *Role of TA in support of permanent staff.*
- *Some points need to be addressed.*
- *Staff meeting discussion.*
- *TA policy needs to be written.*
- *This is definitely something my school needs to improve.*
- *We can always benefit from this alongside our internal 'audit' process.*
- *We will continue to develop.*
- *We will add an element to existing plan.*

A little surprisingly, whilst 44.6% indicated that they would send teachers to the INSET sessions that formed part of the Inspired Educators' project, 40.1% indicated they were not sure. This can be interpreted in a number of ways, but the perhaps the most likely explanation is that whilst feeling generally positive about the input and recognising areas in need of development, respondents did not feel that they could commit on paper to sending teachers without first checking the practicalities such as release time and supply costs back at their schools. A salient point is that the majority of respondents were SENCOs rather than head teachers and may not have been in the position to make this decision – even though the question was about intent rather than binding them to an arrangement. In some cases the attendee may

not have been certain of the benefits for their setting, taking into account its current stage of development regarding TA usage and other priorities. For some it is also possible that they considered the seminar was a sufficient starting point for them to be able to take forward actions in their school without additional input. Another possible interpretation is that it was not clear enough to respondents what the teacher INSET phase of the project entailed and more information was required in order to decide.

It will be important for Mencap to review the information given within the seminars and reassure themselves that a lack of clarity regarding the training for teachers was not a factor contributing to the relatively high percentage of attendees indicating they were unsure whether they would access it.

Summary Discussion

In terms of the intention to attract senior staff with strategic responsibilities who could take forward developments in school the seminars were successful. Viewed in terms of the specific intent to attract heads and SENCOs, the proportion of head teachers (25.5%) was perhaps lower than might have been anticipated. SENCOs were well represented with around half indicating that they were in this role. A salient point is that in a large secondary school the head teacher or principle may not have a role in relation to the preparedness and effective deployment of TAs beyond the general level of overall accountability for the quality of practice in the school and associated outcomes for all pupils.

By far the most popular reason for attending the seminar was a desire to improve the effective use of TAs. This is not necessarily an indication that practice was felt to be underdeveloped or weak. However it is interesting to note that prior to the seminar, only 4.7% viewed their current practice as outstanding and 53.1% considered it to be 'good'. This dropped to 3.4% 'outstanding' and 49.1% 'good' in the post seminar questionnaire. The fact that among a group of senior leaders 39.4% did not feel able to rate their school's practice as 'good' or 'outstanding' reveals a need for the work of the Inspired Educators project. The increase from 13.4% in the pre seminar questionnaire to 37.5% in the post seminar questionnaire of respondents indicating their practice was in need of improvement would seem to illustrate the role of the seminar in increasing awareness of what represents effective practice. Despite possible doubts regarding the quality of practice in relation to how teaching assistants were used, it was evident from the data that they are generally well regarded in terms of being a valuable asset and representing good value for money.

The training provided by the seminars was well received, with the majority of attendees reporting positively on the trainers knowledge and presentation skills (55.8% excellent, 24.3% very good, 11.2% good, 1.1% satisfactory), the extent to which the seminar objectives were met (46.4% excellent, 32.2% very good, 13.5% good, 1.5% satisfactory) and the quality of the materials (37.1% excellent, 34.8% very good, 17.2% good, 3.4% satisfactory). The data indicates that the seminars were successful in developing attendees' knowledge and understanding in relation to learning disability, SEN and inclusion, Mencap's rationale for the Inspired Educators project and the effective use of TAs to support/work with pupils with SEN.

It was clear from the responses to the questionnaires that teaching assistants are used in variety of ways in the schools represented. The dominant uses were *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class* with 46.6% and 45.8% of respondents respectively indicating TAs were 'often used' in these ways. However, in addition to these, three other forms of use were identified by around a third of respondents as 'often used'. The interesting comparison is that despite 46.6% of respondents indicating *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN* was a mode of deployment 'often used' only 16.6% of respondents in pre seminar questionnaire felt it was 'very effective'. This percentage dropped to just 6.7% in the post seminar questionnaire, suggesting that the input received had led to further questioning of the effectiveness of this practice. A similar issue emerged with *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*. Though 45.8% said TAs were often used in this way, only 26.6% felt it was a 'very effective' mode of deployment. This then dropped to 9.7% in post seminar questionnaire. In relation to all areas of TA activity included in the questionnaire there was a drop in the number of respondents believing them to be 'very effective' in the post seminar questionnaire.

A number of issues were highlighted related to the themes of communication and TA preparedness through the data collected. In relation to all statements related to this issue within the questionnaire the proportion of respondents indicating a level of agreement ('agree' or 'strongly agree') was never more than 50% of those who could have responded. The highest proportion of respondents indicating a level of agreement with any statement was 47.3% (for *Teachers are able to work with/manage TAs effectively*). The statements *TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom*, *TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom* and *Communication between teachers and TAs is good* were all agreed with ('agree' or strongly agree') by approximately 45% of respondents. Though a lot of respondents missed out this question and so the conclusion cannot be drawn that more than half did not feel able to give this positive response, between a fifth and quarter of those who could have responded recorded responses of 'don't know', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. Because those surveyed were typically senior leaders even a response of 'don't know' is relevant to consider as arguably for a strategic leader simply not knowing reveals a need for some school self-evaluation in order to find out. The statements *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs* and *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms* drew higher levels of disagreement. These were disagreed or strongly disagreed with by 36.1% and 37.2% respectively. This might be explained by the fact these have a timetabling implication as time needs to be provided for these to take place. Without this the reliance may be on the goodwill of TAs to arrive or stay beyond their allocated time and opportunistic conversations rather than planned opportunities. After the seminars many respondents indicated that they needed to develop practice in relation to communication and TA preparedness.

In the post questionnaire only 38% of respondents felt that TAs had sufficient skills and knowledge in relation to the National Curriculum and less than half (45.5%) of respondents felt teachers understood the role of the TA. Only about a third of respondents felt the role of TAs was understood by parents. The latter finding is important in terms of ensuring parents are kept informed as stakeholders when changes are being made to the deployment of TAs that are likely to impact on individual pupils' experiences of the support they receive.

There are clear indications from the data that those attending the seminars were caused to re-appraise their views of current practice in relation to forms of TA deployment, the time devoted to particular TA activities and the effectiveness of these. In terms of achieving the Inspired Educators project's aims of engaging senior leaders who would then lead change, evidence of impact is provided by the high proportion (80.9%) of attendees who indicated that they intended to develop an action plan. Though 44.6% of attendees indicated that they would send teachers on the Inspired Educators training available via the Teaching Schools, 40.1% were not sure. This could be explained in a variety of ways. One explanation may be that it was not made sufficiently clear what this offered and how schools could access it. More likely is that attendees wanted to think more about this and discuss it back at their schools. This might be because they did not have the authority to make a decision or because they needed to take a more considered decision based on their particular school's current priorities and stage of development. For some the seminar input may have provided sufficient stimulus for the school to take forward developments independently without further input. It may, therefore, be important to recognise that the head teacher and SENCO seminars have a value as standalone events where a school has the capacity to bring about change without further external input through the teacher INSET.

Chapter 3: Teacher INSET

Key Points

- By far the most popular reason for accessing the Teachers' INSET was a desire to improve the effective use of TAs.
- The majority of attendees reported positively on the trainers' knowledge and presentation skills (31.9% excellent, 35.6% very good, 23.4% good, 7.4% satisfactory, 1% poor).
- The majority of attendees reported positively on the extent to which the seminar objectives were met (25.1% excellent, 39.1% very good, 25.6% good, 7% satisfactory, 1% poor).
- The majority of attendees reported positively on the quality of the materials (17.4% excellent, 29.3% very good, 31.9% good, 16.7% satisfactory, 3.3% poor).
- The dominant uses of TAs were *In class general support with focus on those with SEN*, *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class* and *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class*. In all three cases the proportion of respondents viewing these as 'very effective' dropped in the post INSET questionnaire.
- Approximately a third of respondents did not feel teachers had sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms or to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs.
- In the post INSET questionnaire many respondents indicated that they needed to develop practice in relation to communication and TA preparedness.
- Two thirds of respondents felt teachers understood the role of the TA. Only about a third of respondents felt the role of TAs was understood by parents
- There are clear indications from the data that those attending the Teacher INSET were caused to re-appraise their views of their school's current practice in relation to forms of TA deployment, the time devoted to particular TA activities and the effectiveness of these.
- Approximately one third (32.6%) of respondents indicated that they planned to make changes to their practice and 37.1% indicated that they may make changes after some thought.

Introduction

This section of the evaluation report sets out the findings from the questionnaires completed by teachers⁴ prior to and immediately after accessing training provided by the six Teaching Schools as part of the Inspired Educators project. In the case of models where INSET delivery stretched over several sessions the post training questionnaire was completed after the last input from the Teaching School.

⁴ For convenience this group is referred to as teachers although as discussed within this chapter not all of those attending were in a teaching role.

As previously indicated, the pre INSET questionnaire was completed by 788 respondents, which is estimated to be approximately 66% of those who attended the training. The post INSET questionnaire was completed by 598 respondents. In the vast majority of cases both questionnaires were completed in paper form, although there was provision for both to be administered electronically. A factor that must always be taken into account when interpreting the data is the difference in the sample size. The presumption is that those *not* completing the post INSET questionnaire were broadly representative rather than mainly holders of a particular view. It is therefore possible to be reasonably confident when there are relatively large differences in the response to a particular question. Smaller differences in pre and post INSET responses are at greater risk of being due to the difference in sample size and so need to be treated with more caution.

Details of those accessing the Teacher INSET

Table 3.1 indicates the proportion of questionnaires returned by delegates receiving INSET provided by each of these schools.

Teaching School	% (N)
Forest Way School	20.9% (165)
The Loyne Specialist School	14.2% (112)
Notre Dame High School	17.9% (141)
The Partnership Teaching School	17.4% (137)
Swiss Cottage School	8.4% (66)
Town End Academy	19.3% (78)

Table 3.1: Proportion of respondents attending Inset provide by the training schools (pre INSET questionnaire).

In the pre INSET questionnaire, respondents indicated that they came from a range of school types. The largest group indicated they came from a primary school (38.2%) and a school size of 151-300 pupils (29.7%). The number of teachers and TAs employed varied, the most common numbers being 1-20 teachers (51%), and 1-20 TAs (64.2%). The largest percentage of respondents (25.3%) indicated that their schools had 11-20% of children on their SEN register, though the range raised from 0-100% SEN. The 100% is explained by the fact that some schools accessing training were special schools. More detail is included in Appendices 21 and 22.

Although as expected the majority (62.2%) of respondents identified themselves as class teachers or trainee teachers, many indicated other roles either discrete or conducted in combination with their primary role. These included members of the senior management team, SENCOs, TAs and HLTAs (see Appendix 23).

In the pre seminar questionnaire over two thirds (71.6%) indicated they held Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The length of teaching experience represented varied, with 12.8% of respondents indicating they had held QTS for less than a year whereas 19.7% had held it for more than 10 years. The implication is that there was recognition amongst those accessing the training that the effective use of TAs was not just relevant to teachers at a particular stage in their careers. For those providing the training there is the implication that they were providing for audiences with differing levels of teaching experience.

Only 8.6% of respondents indicated that they held a qualification in relation to SEN. These included those with the National Award for SEN Coordination or who were currently undertaking it. Some held this with other qualifications. In addition many other qualifications identified by participants were held by just one person.

Reasons for accessing the INSET

In common with the responses of those attending the head teacher and SENCO seminars, by far the most popular reason for accessing the Teachers' INSET was a desire to improve the effective use of TAs. This was followed by personal development (18.4%) and part of staff development and the appraisal system (17.5%). In addition a number of other reasons were noted by individuals (see Table 3.2).

Reason for accessing the INSET	% (N)
It links to an identified development need in our school regarding the use of TAs	14.7 (116)
Growing number of children with SEN	3.4% (27)
Wish to improve the effective use of TAs	24.1% (190)
Part of our staff development and appraisal system	17.5% (138)
To address an issue raised by Ofsted	6.1% (48)
Personal development/CPD	18.4% (145)
Other reasons noted	
A compulsory staff meeting	0.1% (1)
Head teacher suggestion	0.3% (2)
I have chosen to focus upon the issue of TA deployment as part of my Level 3 award.	0.1% (1)
NQT training day	0.1% (1)
Part of NQT Package paid for by the school and a personal interest to improve use of TA in the classroom	0.1% (1)
Part of the NQT induction	0.1% (1)
Part of the weekly meeting	0.1% (1)
Requested by Forest Way Teaching School Alliance	0.1% (1)
Session at NQT summer conference	0.1% (1)
Staff meeting	0.1% (1)
Training provided by school	0.1% (1)
University lecture	0.1% (1)

Table 3.2 Reasons for accessing the INSET (Teacher pre INSET questionnaire).

Views on the INSET

The majority of respondents were very positive about the organisational arrangements for registering for the seminars and the pre seminar information provided (see Table 3).

Pre Seminar Organisation	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Information about the aims of the INSET	19.7% (118)	25.9% (155)	33.4% (200)	9.0% (54)	5.4% (32)
Information about location and time of the INSET	28.6% (171)	29.4% (176)	26.8% (160)	5.2% (31)	1.8% (11)
Registering for the training/INSET	31.9% (142)	26.6% (158)	25.4% (152)	5.0% (30)	1.3 (8)

Table 3.3: Teachers' views on the pre seminar organisation.

A small number of respondents gave 'poor' ratings in relation to *Information about location and time of the seminar* and *Registering for the seminar*. This would seem to indicate individual problems encountered rather than any weaknesses at a systemic level with the pre INSET arrangements.

The INSET was well received by the vast majority of respondents (see Table 3.4).

Area	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
The extent to which the INSET objectives were met?	25.1% (150)	39.1% (234)	25.6% (153)	7.0% (42)	2.2% (13)
The tutor's knowledge and presentation skills	31.9% (191)	35.6% (213)	23.4% (140)	7.4% (44)	1.0% (6)
Effectiveness of the methods of presentation/teaching methods used	21.2% (127)	32.3 % (194)	29.6% (177)	13.5% (81)	2.5% (15)
The quality of the materials	17.4% (104)	29.3% (175)	31.9% (191)	16.7% (100)	3.2% (19)

Table 3.4: Respondents' views on the INSET received.

In all four areas the proportion of attendees recording responses of 'excellent', 'very good' and 'good' was very high, ranging from approximately 78% to 90%. However in comparison to the responses from those attending head teacher and SENCO seminars there is a reduction in the proportion of respondents giving the highest rating. The area where the difference is most pronounced is in relation to *The tutor's knowledge and presentation skills*. This might be explained by differences in the personnel delivering the two forms of training. It should be recognised that the head teacher and SENCO seminars were led by individuals with experience in delivering training and first-hand knowledge of the research quoted. As data gathered from the Teaching School trainers indicated (see Chapter 1), amongst those delivering the teacher INSET there were some with relatively little experience in providing training and variations in the level of confidence with regard to leading the INSET sessions. The different purpose of the training for teachers was potentially also a factor influencing responses – whilst those attending the head teacher and SENCO seminars may have been concerned with the more strategic, whole school implications, the teachers are likely to have had a stronger focus on the practical application of what they were hearing. Perceptions of the likely practical application within their context may have made them harsher judges.

General views on the TA role

Data gathered in the pre INSET questionnaire (see Table 3.5) indicated a generally very positive view of TAs within schools.

Views about TAs	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
TAs are a valuable asset	-	0.3% (2)	1.6% (13)	16.2% (128)	65.9% (519)
TAs represent good value for money	0.1% (1)	0.8% (6)	9.6% (76)	20.6% (162)	52.4% (413)
TAs have sufficient skills & knowledge in relation to the national curriculum	0.5% (4)	11.3% (89)	20.8% (164)	36.9% (291)	13.7% (108)
TAs are most effective when directed/supported by a qualified teacher	0.1% (1)	2.0% (16)	6.9% (54)	34.8% (274)	40.0% (315)
TAs are well liked by pupils	0.3% (2)	4.3% (28)	30.2% (199)	49.1% (323)	16.1% (106)
The role of TAs is understood by teachers	0.4% (3)	6.7% (53)	10.0% (79)	36.9% (291)	29.4% (232)
The role of TAs is understood by parents	1.5% (12)	13.6% (107)	38.5% (303)	22.3% (176)	8.1% (64)

Table 3.5: Responses from the pre Teacher INSET questionnaire on how TAs who work with/support pupils with SEN are regarded.

In the case of all statements the proportion of teachers selecting 'strongly agree' was higher than the number of those in in the head teacher and SENCO pre seminar questionnaire recording these responses. The biggest difference was in relation to *TAs are a valuable asset* and *TAs represent good value for money* where respectively 39.7% and 25.6% of those completing the head teacher and SENCO post seminar questionnaire strongly agreed compared to 65.9% and 52.4% for the teachers questionnaire. This is likely to reflect the difference between the strategic perspectives of those attending the head teacher and SENCO seminars and the more pragmatic perspectives of those attending the teacher INSET. Reflecting this greater level of positivity of those completing the teacher post INSET questionnaire, it was only in relation to *The role of TAs is understood by parents* where those indicating a level of agreement ('agree' or 'strongly agree') fell below 50%. With the exception of this statement and *TAs have sufficient skills & knowledge in relation to the national curriculum* the proportion indicating a level of agreement exceeds 65%. Though viewed from this perspective the divergence is clear, there were also areas of consensus between the two sets of questionnaires. Though the proportions indicating a level of agreement were different, the head teacher and SENCO post seminar questionnaire and the teacher post INSET questionnaire the lowest levels of agreement were in relation to *TAs have sufficient skills & knowledge in relation to the national curriculum* and *The role of TAs is understood by parents*. Both groups recorded higher levels of agreement with *TAs are a valuable asset* and *TAs are most effective when directed/supported by a qualified teacher* compared to many of the other statements.

Views on current practice in the use of TAs

Respondents were asked a sequence of questions in the pre and post INSET questionnaires seeking their views on the role of those TAs employed by the school who routinely spend part or all of their time working with/supporting pupils with SEN.

As Table 3.6 indicates, the seminar appears to have highlighted for some that practice about which they felt reasonably confident was in need of improvement.

View of Practice	Pre INSET % (N)	Post INSET % (N)
Outstanding:	11.8% (93)	9.4% (56)
Good:	60.8% (479)	63.7% (381)
Requires improvement:	10.4% (82)	24.6% (147)
Inadequate:	0.1 (1)	0.7% (4)

Table 3.6: Teacher's views on the quality of the school's practice pre and post INSET

There is a slight reduction in the proportion of respondents judging practice to be 'outstanding' and a slight increase in proportion judging it to be 'good'. As highlighted in the introduction to this chapter, the difference in sample size between the two questionnaires could be a factor explaining these relatively small changes. However the change that is of more interest is in the proportion indicating that practice requires improvement. The difference in sample size for the pre and post INSET questionnaires may still be a factor and so some caution is needed in the interpretation, but it seems that, just as with the head teacher and SENCO seminars, the input provided has led to a reappraisal of current practice.

Perspectives on TA time devoted to specific activities

In the pre INSET questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate how TAs were typically used. The dominant usages were *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*, with 80.9% and 79.4% of respondents indicating that these were used (see Table 3.7). With the exception of *Administration (including training/meetings)* and *Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)* relatively high proportions of respondents indicated that the other forms of use were also 'often used'. In addition respondents indicated that TAs were used for a range of other roles (see Table 3.8).

In designing the questionnaire it was recognised that the classroom teacher might not always have the authority to determine how the teaching assistant was used. This decision might, for example, be taken by the SENCO. The pre INSET questionnaire specifically asked teachers to comment on how they used TAs to work with/support pupils with SEN when they had responsibility for their deployment (see Table 3.9). In this question 'Administration' was left out as it was considered that this was an area where there would be considerable variation in the extent to which teachers had responsibility for directing TAs to carry out administrative duties as schools are likely to adopt different stances regarding this usage.

Use of Teaching Assistants	Not Sure	Never used	Rarely used	Occasionally used	Often used
Administration (including training/meetings)	16.1% (127)	5.8% (46)	15.4% (121)	30.3% (239)	12.7% (100)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	1.5% (12)	0.9 (7)	0.5% (4)	11.7% (92)	69.2% (545)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	1.5% (12)	1.3% (10)	4.1% (32)	24.0% (189)	53.9% (422)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	2.2% (17)	0.9% (7)	2.5% (20)	20.4% (161)	58.8% (463)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	4.4% (35)	2.5% (20)	8.9% (70)	32.0% (252)	36.7% (289)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	5.7% (45)	3.2% (25)	11.3% (89)	29.2% (230)	34.5% (272)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	7.0% (55)	1.4% (11)	6.7% (53)	27.2% (214)	41.8% (329)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	5.6% (44)	3.6% (28)	15.4% (121)	30.6% (241)	26.6% (210)

Table 3.7 Usage of TAs by schools, Teacher perception (prior to INSET)

Additional uses of TAs
Administering medication, feeding, personal care, physio etc.
All our TAs cover lunch times, we have MDSAs only
Catch up literacy intervention
Changing children who have had an accident
Creating resources and displays
Support different groups of children
Supporting child falling behind (but not SEN)
TA CPD
TAs teaching classes eg. when subject specialist is absent
Unsure as don't have them in PE

Table 3.8 Additional used of TAs as identified by teachers prior to INSET

When Tables 3.7 and 3.9 are compared it is interesting to note that in relation to every activity apart from 'Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)' when teachers had responsibility for TA deployment the percentage recording 'often used' dropped.

Activity	Not Sure	Never used	Rarely used	Occasionally used	Often used
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	1.5% (12)	1.9% (15)	2.5% (20)	23.1% (182)	49.2% (388)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	1.5% (12)	2.5% (20)	8.2% (65)	29.4% (232)	36.3% (286)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	1.5% (12)	2.4% (19)	4.3% (34)	25.8% (203)	43.9% (346)
Supporting/working with individual children with SEN out of class	2.0% (16)	10.4% (82)	20.6% (162)	28.4% (224)	16.0% (126)
Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN out of class	1.9% (15)	11.8% (93)	19.8% (156)	27.8% (219)	16.2% (128)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	4.7% (37)	10.7% (84)	11.9% (94)	29.4% (232)	20.7% (163)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	4.6% (36)	12.8% (101)	20.8% (164)	26.8% (211)	12.3% (97)

Table 3.9: How teachers use TAs (responses prior to the INSET)

Respondents also provided a number of additional comments shown below:

- *Depends on if they are told to only work with a specific student, or if they can be more flexible and assist generally.*
- *Don't have enough TA support where needed.*
- *Don't use TAs.*
- *Floating while I work with SEN.*
- *Have no contact with TAs.*
- *I appoint members of staff to work e.g. 1-1, but teachers have responsibility for day to day deployment.*
- *I take a practical subject so I don't get TA help in lessons.*
- *Not relevant- not had responsibility to deploy.*
- *Not sent any TAs.*
- *SEN go to year group below for reading, writing etc.*
- *Support different groups.*
- *This is all changing - staff have predominately used staff as a teacher TA. Aim to use support staff as a teacher focused learning resource.*
- *Working with groups of more able children.*

Though individual responses, these provide an indication of the variations in practice that influence TA use in schools.

The questions regarding the usage of TAs was accompanied within the pre INSET questionnaire by a question asking about the time devoted to each of the activities listed (see Table 3.10).

Activity	Not sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	24.0% (189)	5.3% (42)	3.9% (31)	41.0% (323)	6.9% (54)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	4.8% (38)	0.4% (3)	6.6% (52)	64.1% (505)	6.5% (51)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	4.4% (35)	1.3% (10)	6.0% (47)	60.9% (480)	9.1% (72)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	5.5% (43)	0.6% (5)	5.3% (42)	63.7% (502)	8.1% (64)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	11.0% (87)	2.9% (23)	4.9% (39)	53.3% (420)	9.8% (77)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	11.8% (93)	3.2% (25)	4.6% (36)	52.3% (412)	10.3% (81)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	11.9% (94)	1.3% (10)	2.4% (19)	52.3% (412)	14.8% (117)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	13.6% (107)	3.3% (26)	6.0% (47)	52.8% (416)	6.1% (48)

Table 3.10: Teachers views prior to the INSET on the time TAs spend on particular activities

Notably the majority of respondents (between 52% and 64%) felt that, with the exception of 'Administration', the time spent on each of the other activities was about right. Though it was not the same schools represented, it is worthy of note that the teachers seemed to be a little more satisfied with the time devoted to particular activities than those who had attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars. In the head teacher and SENCO pre seminar questionnaire there were only three areas of activity where more than half of those who responded felt the time spent was 'about right'.

In the post INSET questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate if they felt the time devoted to particular uses of TAs was appropriate in light of what they had heard (see Table 3.11).

In relation to all areas in Table 3.11 there was an increase of approximately 5-6% in the proportion of respondents suggesting the time devoted to it was about right. In relation to *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN, Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*, approximately two thirds felt the amount of time devoted to them was 'about right'. In the case of all eight activities listed there was an increase in the proportion of respondents considering too much time was devoted to them.

Use of Teaching Assistants	Not Sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	24.7% (148)	6.5% (39)	5.2% (31)	46.3% (277)	13.2% (79)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	2.5% (15)	0.5% (3)	18.6% (111)	69.6% (416)	4.8% (29)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	3.2% (19)	2.5% (15)	18.1% (108)	66.9% (400)	5.5% (33)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	2.5% (15)	1.5% (9)	15.2% (91)	69.7% (417)	7.2% (43)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	9.0% (54)	7.5% (45)	13.5% (81)	61.0% (365)	5.7% (34)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	8.7% (52)	9.5% (57)	12.0% (72)	58.7% (351)	6.9% (41)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	14.0% (84)	3.3% (20)	7.0% (42)	59.9% (358)	12.0% (72)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	16.7% (100)	8.4% (50)	6.7% (40)	59.2% (354)	4.3% (26)

Table 3.11: Teachers' views after the INSET on the time TAs spend on particular activities.

Some of the reasoning behind responses recorded is explained in some of the additional qualitative comments supplied. For example, one respondent noted '*Not enough time spent on pre-preparation or feedback from lessons. Unclear on marking*', whilst another wrote '*Too much time doing cover when teachers are away.*' Another was more positive in noting; '*We have already moved in the directions suggested, though there is always room for improvement, Interested to note move back to specific interventions*'.

In the context of the impact of the training on attendees' thinking the important consideration is the changes between the pre and post INSET questionnaires. There is some suggestion that the INSET caused some teachers to question their school's existing practice. However it should be noted that the proportion of teachers changing their views was not as great as the proportion of head teachers and SENCOs changing their views in responses to the same question in their post seminar questionnaire. The relatively high proportion of teachers recording 'about right' as their response should not create the impression that there is no need for change in how schools in general use TAs. It should not be overlooked that for seven of the eight areas between a quarter and a third of respondents did not feel able to record a response of 'about right' for the time devoted to it. In the case of 'Administration' the proportion not feeling able to do this was 43.1%. As with those completing the head teacher and SENCOs questionnaires this may be indicative of a degree of uncertainty based on an awareness that this is a much debated area (eg Ofsted 2004, 2006, Blatchford et al 2009) with some criticism being voiced nationally regarding methods of deployment in relation to pupils with SEN.

Perspectives on the effectiveness of specific activities

Perceptions of the effectiveness of different forms of TA use were explored in the pre INSET questionnaire (see Table 3.12) and the post INSET questionnaire (see Table 3.13)

Activity	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	10.9% (86)	2.4% (19)	24.1% (190)	30.2% (238)	11.5% (91)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	1.0% (8)	1.1% (9)	4.8% (38)	34.6% (273)	38.6% (304)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	1.4% (11)	1.3% (10)	5.1% (40)	33.8% (266)	38.2% (301)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	1.3% (10)	0.6% (8)	5.7% (45)	32.6% (257)	40.6% (320)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	6.3% (50)	2.4% (19)	12.7% (100)	30.3% (239)	28.4% (224)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	6.1% (48)	2.4% (19)	15.0% (118)	29.9% (236)	27.3% (215)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	4.2% (33)	1.3% (10)	16.0% (126)	28.0% (221)	30.8% (243)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	7.1% (56)	2.4% (19)	17.3% (36)	28.6% (225)	24.1% (190)

Table 3.12: Teacher's views prior to the INSET on the effectiveness of TA use in relation to particular activities.

In relation to the eight activities specified in the questionnaires the pattern for teachers appeared to be a drop in the 'very effective' responses immediately after the INSET (Table 3.13). Alongside this change, there was also a substantial increase in the proportion of respondents recording a response of 'somewhat effective' in the post INSET questionnaire. The implication is that some who had previously been confident enough to record a response of 'very effective' were only prepared to record a response of 'somewhat effective' post INSET. This may indicate that the INSET raised some questions for them regarding current practice.

Some respondents also took the opportunity to record some additional comments in relation to the perceived effectiveness of TAs:

- *I feel confident that TAs are used effectively in some areas of school but not throughout.*
- *I will begin to utilise my TAs more by giving them targets for individual pupils I would like them to support.*
- *In Foundation Stage 'key persons' make it a bit different.*
- *It depends on the individual TA. I am not prepared to generalise human beings, most are good. Some need more guidance.*

- *More teacher included in intervention needed.*
- *Not sure how effective the interventions are.*
- *Too little time to work together for feedback and discussing planning.*

Though only seven respondents provided an additional comment, two of these highlighted the important point that teachers may feel certain activities are effective in certain specific situations, depending on various factors:

'It depends on the individual TA. I am not prepared to generalise human beings, most are good'

'I feel confident that TAs are used effectively in some areas of school but not throughout'

Activity	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	8.9% (53)	6.9% (41)	27.4% (164)	34.1% (204)	9.2% (55)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	0.8% (5)	3.7% (22)	8.0% (48)	52.3% (313)	21.6% (129)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	1.7% (10)	4.3% (26)	9.9% (59)	48.5% (290)	21.9% (131)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	1.3% (8)	3.8% (23)	10.0% (60)	51.3% (307)	20.2% (121)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	5.2% (31)	5.0% (30)	17.6% (105)	42.5% (254)	16.1% (96)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	7.0% (42)	4.3% (26)	19.1% (114)	42.3% (253)	14.2% (85)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	4.3% (26)	4.5% (27)	17.9% (107)	41.5% (248)	18.7% (112)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	7.7% (46)	4.7% (28)	22.1% (132)	34.6% (207)	16.4% (98)

Table 3.13: Teachers views after the INSET on the effectiveness of TA use in relation to particular activities.

As with the head teacher and SENCO post seminar questionnaire, when asking about effectiveness there is a need to recognise that some respondents will be making a general appraisal of a particular mode of deployment in the sense of whether or not they consider it represents good practice, whereas others may base their view on their specific context. They may, for example, be commenting based on their perceptions of the competence and quality of the work of individual in their school carrying out this activity.

Perspectives on communication between Teachers and TAs

A key focus of the Inspired Educators project was improving the preparedness of TAs to work effectively with pupils with special educational needs. This relies on good communication between teachers and TAs to ensure there is a shared understanding of the support required and robust mechanisms for dialogue regarding pupils' learning. In the pre INSET questionnaire (see Table 3.14) respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a number of statements related to communication between teachers and TAs.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom	0.5% (4)	5.2% (41)	14.6% (115)	45.8% (361)	16.8% (132)
Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs	4.1% (32)	26.8% (211)	14.2% (112)	30.1% (237)	8.5% (67)
Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms	6.6% (52)	31.9% (251)	16.4% (129)	23.5% (185)	5.1% (40)
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom	0.4% (3)	8.1% (64)	27.3% (215)	37.4% (295)	9.3% (73)
Teachers receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions	2.5% (20)	19.7% (155)	22.0% (173)	30.3% (239)	8.5% (67)

Table 3.14: Teacher's views from the pre INSET questionnaire on communication between TAs and Teachers

The highest proportion of respondents indicating a level of agreement with any statement was 62.6% (for *TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom*). The other statements a large proportion of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with were:

- TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom (46.7%).
- Teachers receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions (38.8%).

Though in response to these statements a higher proportion of respondents indicated 'strongly agree' or 'agree' than any other individual response option, it is important to recognise that a sizeable proportion did not feel able to select these. In the case of *TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom* the proportion not selecting 'agree or strongly agree' was around a third. In the case of *Teachers receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions* the proportion was 44.2% and so

higher than the proportion who indicated a level of agreement. Even in the case of *TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom* where a higher proportion indicated agreement, it could be seen as a concern that around a fifth did not feel able to select 'agree' or 'strongly agree'.

Looked at just from perspective of the strength of disagreement it is worthy of note that 30.9% and 38.5% of respondents respectively disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms* and *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs*.

Many teachers took the opportunity to provide additional comments in the pre INSET questionnaire regarding TA use:

- *'TA' is not a brand. TAs are individuals with their own strengths and weaknesses. A good working relationship will allow you to gauge these and choose- their deployment accordingly.*
- *Each TA is different, like teachers. If communication is good between TA and teacher, and planning and expectancy is shared, then the relationship/ effectiveness is good.*
- *All of these responses depend entirely upon the individual TA and time to do the work. Also, time to discuss and prep with TAs out of class.*
- *As a 6th form teacher I don't use TAs- this may impact my responses.*
- *As a Y2 teacher, I think it is vitally important to have a full time TA in class to support all the planned interventions.*
- *Discussion between myself and TA often ad hoc. 2 minutes at break time type of thing. Very valuable when it happens. Often need to be an opportunist to get communication time.*
- *Each individual TA is different, however my experience has been mainly positive.*
- *For teachers and TAs to work effectively for the benefit of the student specific time to work together and plan is needed.*
- *I accept that I can/should use TAs to a higher standard but I struggle with time, etc.*
- *I am aware that I do not always communicate the LO to the LSA beforehand. It would be useful to have the time to discuss learning/specific student with the LSA on a regular basis.*
- *I couldn't comment on an individual school as I work as an ITT consultant. However, I am extremely keen to understand the role of TA within teaching and learning.*
- *I cover classes so I am aware of how TAs are used within SEN, but I am not involved in directing them with target work.*
- *I do feel TAs are used to children's advantage. Feedback/ planning time is paused at 20 minutes a week- could be longer but time is tight.*
- *I hardly use my TA. She is constantly re-deployed to cover other classes.*
- *I have completed this based upon my experiences with TAs and as a TA at my school. I have been lucky to have a full time TA during my time as a*

teacher and I worked full time as a TA prior to achieving QTS. I am lucky that my TA works closely with me to ensure pupils are engaged and making progress. She takes guidance from my practice and implements similar strategies and expectations.

- *I have done a lot of research into the preparedness, deployment and practice of TAs and am currently in the process of changing practice.*
- *I manage the use of TAs in our school. I would like some practical tips on how to manage this role.*
- *It depends on the teacher and the TA for most of these questions.*
- *It would be lovely if TAs could take part in MFL lessons more often. In relation to Q15: TAs should be deployed in more departments across school and more time allowed for TAs to get familiar with schemes of work.*
- *It would be preferable if TAs could be placed in appropriate subjects where ever possible.*
- *I've seen better use of TAs at <name of school> in the VI unit. They have advanced information (48 hours) of lesson content to prepare/ plan resources and do more directed one-to-one intervention.*
- *Like teachers, all TAs vary in both skill and experience. I do feel this questionnaire is subjective due to the teacher/TA relationship.*
- *Looking forward to the INSET opportunity.*
- *More time for teachers to liaise with TAs is required to ensure the TA is most effective. TAs require more time for subject specific training.*
- *My class average points progress will be higher if I'm mainly targeting my teaching at the majority of the class. This is because my TA is not skilled enough to teach the more able.*
- *My TA is exceptional. She goes above and beyond her duty to support the children in the class. Children would not make nearly as much progress without her.*
- *My TAs are extremely valuable and I enjoy a good, positive, communicative relationship with them. Having all the children in class all the time would help all get the same message.*
- *Need time to prep and discuss activities with TA. TAs being relied on more and more to cover lessons.*
- *Our school has a very small collection of very well trained TAs. The TAs are not class based so teachers decide when they most need a TA. TAs as a result are not used for filing/ laminating etc. Teachers always work with the SEN children and they are never taken out of class for separate lessons.*
- *Our shared year group TA is always used as cover on our days so the rare occasions we have her, she is used for admin.*
- *Our TAs are incredibly valuable and appropriately share the responsibility of the children making progress.*
- *PE have no TAs for practical lessons.*
- *Since working at this school I have not had a TA in any of my lessons and as such I am unable to comment on a lot of the questions in this survey.*
- *Some LSAs we have in PE are not needed but due to statemented students.*
- *TAs are essential to effective classroom practise if used correctly. I believe TAs to be invaluable.*

- *TAs can be a very effective asset in the classroom. Though time to manage and guide properly is lacking (from teacher perspective).*
- *TAs need to be focussed on subjects - 1 per fortnight is not enough to gain an insight into subject area.*
- *TAs need to be trained and deployed subject specifically, rather than spread across all subjects and groups.*
- *TAs perform a crucial role in school, supporting pupils- but as they often are taken away to do cover they are unable to always fulfil this role effectively.*
- *TAs are seen as low priority but they can be very powerful resource- this needs to change.*
- *TAs used more for behaviour management than to aid learning.*
- *TAs with good subject knowledge are useful and well motivated. Within numeracy I struggle to use them effectively.*
- *Teachers and TAs need more time to liaise and discuss pupil progress. Use of TAs in nursery is very different- they all need to have expertise in all early years areas and how to question, challenge and develop the children further*
- *We do not have sufficient TAs.*

Proposed changes post INSET

In the post INSET questionnaire, teachers were asked if they planned to make any changes in light of the input given (see Table 3.15).

Response	% (N)
Not sure	3.8% (23)
I do not presently plan to make changes	7.5% (45)
I may change how I use TAs after some thought	37.1% (222)
I plan to change the way I use TAs who work with children with SEN	17.1% (102)
I plan to change the way I use all TAs	15.5% (93)

Table 3.15: Teachers' proposed changes after the INSET.

The high proportion recording that they might make changes to the way TAs were used after some thought or would make changes in relation to TA use suggests that the INSET was effective in providing ideas that had the potential to impact on practice. Respondents were invited to provide some examples of the specific changes they proposed to make as a result of the INSET: Many recorded specific changes, though a few remarked on their limited role in relation to TA deployment or expressed a view that their current practice already largely reflected that encouraged by the INSET. The responses are shown below;

- *Good ideas that I will incorporate into what I currently do.*
- *Am going to meet with my LSA(s)!!*
- *Deployment of TAs from head (skills).*
- *Don't have responsibility for deployment.*
- *Ensure I give full expectations on my planning on what I want them to do.*
- *Feedback to senior management team.*
- *Feedback to SMT.*

- *Hopefully to plan training time of effective questioning and often create time for regular feedback/discussion.*
- *I like the idea of a pre-preparation pro-forma.*
- *I need to plan with my TA.*
- *I plan to build in regular TA meetings with SENCO so that use of TAs can be evaluated in the appropriate way. Teachers to also consider this. I also plan for this to include evaluation of how effectively TAs think they are used*
- *I plan to make sure I include effective use of TAs in the ITT training.*
- *I plan to work with teachers on their effective use of TAs, Quality First Teaching methods, differentiation for Teaching and Learning.*
- *I regularly change the way I use TAs.*
- *I will change a few things but many of the statements I already currently employ.*
- *If I got the chance to work with TAs.*
- *Many of these we have already started doing*
- *NA- Do not have TAs in year 6.*
- *No, because I deploy them in line with this research anyway.*
- *Not in my own class - but would like to discuss general use.*
- *Ongoing changes across school as SENCO. Monitoring effectiveness.*
- *Speak to head teacher about how they can help.*
- *The way TAs are used across the school changes from year to year. HODs are responsible for the way TAs are used in their departments*
- *This requires time from our SLT to allow changes to happen*
- *Train them on questioning*
- *Want TA to work with other children to extend learning.*
- *We edited the school policy in light of this research. TA currently not used for SEN only groups in classroom.*
- *We made changes/had discussions after the first session for heads.*
- *Whole class strategies.*
- *Will ask our SLT to support our school.*
- *As a cover supervisor will follow lead of class teacher.*
- *Feedback to SMT*
- *I already rotate my time around all groups.*
- *Inclusive use of SEN support.*
- *Monitoring effective interventions.*
- *More time available to know planning/resource making.*
- *Need to link more but need to think of best way to do this.*
- *Time with TA for feedback.*
- *Training of staff.*
- *When I get them I will consider some of the deployment and practice tools as they pertain to me.*
- *Working with other groups- gifted and mixed ability.*
- *Would like to work with both teachers and TAs to improve deployment.*

The post INSET questionnaire sought to examine where teachers saw the priority for change in relation to the eight areas of activity focused on throughout the

questionnaire. The responses are shown in Table 3.16. Of particular note are the three areas of activity where around 60% of respondents considered they would make either minor or substantial changes. These were *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN*, *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*.

As well as its value in its own right in indicating the areas the training has encouraged attendees to focus on in developing their practice, the data on intended changes also allows comparison with views expressed in pre and post INSET questionnaires related to the perceived effectiveness of particular TA activities. Out of the seven TA activities listed, *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class* was the selected by the highest proportion of respondents (10.4%) as in need of substantial change. Viewed in terms of needing any degree of change 62.6% of the respondents indicated it was an area of practice requiring 'minor' or 'substantial' change. It was an area of activity that in the Pre INSET questionnaire 40.6% of respondents had identified as 'very effective' and 32.6% as 'somewhat effective' (Table 3.12). In the post INSET questionnaire 20.2% of respondents had identified *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class* as 'very effective' and 51.3% as 'somewhat effective' (Table 3.13). The implication is that respondents are not feeling that this practice is significantly flawed as an approach, otherwise larger increases in the proportion of 'Ineffective' responses recorded would have been seen. The high proportion indicating this area of activity was in need of 'minor change' (52.2%) as opposed to 'substantial change' (10.4%) would further support this interpretation of the data. However overall comparisons of data included in Tables 3.13, 3.14 and 3.19 suggests that respondents were questioning this area of TA activity and seeing it as in need of development. It is possible to look at other areas of TA activity where comparatively high proportions considered them 'very effective' in the pre INSET questionnaire and see a similar pattern emerging (see Table 3.17)

Table 3.17 reveals the drop in the proportion of respondents who already considered the particular area of TA activity to be effective but also the comparison with the proportion of respondents in the post INSET questionnaire considering it to be in need of change. The areas of activity in Table 3.17 have been ordered to reflect the proportion of respondents indicating these were in need of 'substantial change'. A very similar order would emerge if the responses for 'minor changes' and 'substantial changes' were combined, with the notable exception of *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN*, which rises from fifth to first place. Perhaps of greatest interest are those areas (*Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*, *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* and *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN*) where in excess of a third considered them to be very effective in the pre INSET questionnaire but in each case relatively high proportions identified them as being in need of some development ('minor' or 'substantial') post INSET.

Activity	Not Sure	No change	Minor changes	Substantial change
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	4.3% (26)	12.9% (77)	55.5% (332)	7.4% (44)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	4.8% (29)	17.9% (107)	48.2% (288)	9.9% (59)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	4.0% (24)	14.5% (87)	52.2% (312)	10.4% (62)
Supporting/working with individual children with SEN out of class	8.2% (49)	27.1% (162)	36.6% (219)	8.2% (49)
Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN out of class	8.5% (51)	27.9% (167)	36.0% (215)	8.0% (48)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	12.2% (73)	27.4% (164)	35.3% (211)	4.2% (25)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	14.4% (86)	36.1% (216)	25.8% (153)	3.5% (21)

Table 3.16: Areas of work with TAs teachers indicated they would change after attending the INSET.

Activity	Pre INSET: Very Effective	Post INSET: Very Effective	Post INSET	
			Minor changes	Substantial change
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	40.6% (320)	20.2% (121)	52.2% (312)	10.4% (62)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	38.2% (301)	21.9% (131)	48.2% (288)	9.9% (59)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	30.3% (239)	16.1% (96)	36.6% (219)	8.2% (49)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	27.3% (215)	14.2% (85)	36.0% (215)	8.0% (48)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	38.6% (304)	21.6% (129)	55.5% (332)	7.4% (44)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	30.8% (243)	18.7% (112)	35.3% (211)	4.2% (25)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	24.1% (190)	16.4% (98)	25.8% (153)	3.5% (21)

Table 3.17 Linking perceptions of effectiveness pre and post INSET with the degree of change considered necessary in the post INSET questionnaire.

The topic of communication between teachers and TAs was revisited in the post INSET questionnaire from the perspective of whether developments were needed in this area. Teachers were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the suggestion that their school's practice needed to develop in relation to a number of areas central to effective communication (see Table 3.18).

We need to develop our practice in relation to:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
How well TAs are informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom	1.8% (11)	9.5% (57)	11/0% (66)	50.2% (300)	12.5% (75)
The opportunities teachers have to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs	1.0% (6)	5.7% (34)	6.7% (40)	51.3% (307)	20.7% (124)
The opportunities teachers have to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms	1.3% (8)	5.7% (34)	7.4% (44)	49.2% (294)	21.7% (130)
How well TAs are informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom	1.0% (6)	9.2% (55)	16.6% (99)	44.3% (265)	13.5% (81)
The feedback teachers receive from TA led interventions.	1.0% (6)	5.9% (35)	11.9% (71)	48.7% (291)	17.1% (102)

Table 3.18: Views from the post INSET questionnaire on areas related to communication between TAs and teachers that need to be developed

The statements *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms* and *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs* attracted the lowest levels of agreement from those completing the pre INSET questionnaire (Table 3.14). These were also the two areas where in the post INSET questionnaire (Table 3.18) there was the highest level of agreement that the school's practice needed to develop. Of particular interest is the fact that in the pre INSET questionnaire, 62.6% of respondents indicated a level of agreement with the statement that *TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom* but in the post INSET questionnaire 62.7% felt it was an area where practice needed to develop. This may indicate that the INSET provoked a change in thinking about current practice, with respondents recognising that an aspect of communication that they previously thought was sound was in need of improvement.

Appendix 24 contains some additional responses given by individuals indicating aspects of practice that they intended to develop. Reassuringly respondents gave a wide variety of responses; the most common revolved around joint planning time, improved communication and deploying TAs in a more flexible manner.

Summary Discussion

The training provided by the Teaching School trainers appears to have been well received. The majority of attendees reported positively on the trainers' knowledge and presentation skills, the extent to which the seminar objectives were met and the quality of the materials.

By far the most popular reason given for accessing the Teachers' INSET was a desire to improve the effective use of TAs. This corresponded with the main reason given by those who attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars. Whilst not necessarily an indication that practice was underdeveloped or weak in this area, it does suggest school staff, whether in more senior positions or classroom teachers, recognise the need for a focus on this area as part of the process of continued school improvement. It was evident from the data that TAs are generally well regarded in terms of being a valuable asset and representing good value for money. The value of TAs had also been recognised by many of those who had attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars, but as a group those attending the teacher INSET were more positive on this point. This may reflect the difference between the strategic whole, school perspective of senior leaders compared to the more pragmatic perspective of the classroom teacher regarding the contribution of the support they receive from TAs.

It was clear from the responses to the questionnaires that teaching assistants are used in a variety of ways in schools. The dominant uses of TAs were *In class general support with focus on those with SEN*, *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class* and *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class*. In all three cases, the proportion of respondents viewing these as 'very effective' dropped in the post INSET questionnaire. Alongside this change, there was also a substantial increase in the proportion of respondents recording a response of 'somewhat effective' in the post INSET questionnaire. The implication is that some who had previously been confident enough to record a response of 'very effective' were only prepared to record a response of 'somewhat effective' post INSET. It is important to recognise that 'effectiveness' is both an interpretable construct and subject to a range of variables. It is possible, for example, to interpret effectiveness in terms of the effect on a particular child with SEN and this could be in relation to social, emotional and academic impact. Effectiveness might also be judged in terms of a broader positive effect in classrooms, in terms of, for example, reducing instances of off-task behaviour or disruption and allowing more time for the teacher to teach (Webster et al 2010). As some of the questionnaire respondents noted in their additional comments, TAs are individuals with their own strengths and weaknesses. It could be argued that though some forms of deployment may be intrinsically more effective than others, effectiveness of any TA activity is influenced by the individual undertaking it and the suitability of this activity in the particular context within which they are working. This does not invalidate the questions posed regarding effectiveness but highlights the point that the interest is not so much in *what* individuals consider to be effective but in the *change* in views of effectiveness as an indication that thinking has been affected by the INSET.

A number of issues were highlighted related to the themes of communication and TA preparedness. Just under a third of respondents expressed a level of disagreement with the statements *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs* and *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms*. The common characteristic of these two statements is that through the use of the word *opportunity* they carry a stronger timetabling implication. In relation to other areas related to communication and preparedness explored within the questionnaires there was less marked concern conveyed by the data provided. However, taking into account those who recorded responses of 'not sure' in addition to those recording levels of disagreement, it is important to recognise that though the level of agreement may be relatively high, a sizeable proportion did not feel able to record either 'agree' or 'strongly agree'. For example, though approximately 63% agreed with statement *TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom* around a third did not give a response of either 'agree' or 'strongly agree'. In the case of *Teachers receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions*, the proportion selecting a response of 'strongly disagree, disagree' or 'don't know' was 44.2% and so higher than the proportion who indicated a level of agreement.

A common issue emerging from the pre INSET questionnaire and the head teacher and SENCO pre seminar questionnaire was doubt over the extent to which parents understand the role of TAs. It may simply be reference to a general lack of understanding or the implication may be a misunderstanding in the sense of holding a particular belief about the role of the TA that was at odds with the way the school was deploying them. Whatever the interpretation, the implication is that in taking forward changes based on the input from the seminars and INSET schools and individual teachers need to consider how they keep parents informed so that the reasons for new ways of working are understood.

A high proportion (66.3%) of those completing the pre INSET questionnaire felt teachers understood the role of the TA. It is important, of course, to recognise that those completing the questionnaire were teachers. There was less certainty in the response to this point from those who attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars, with only 45.5% feeling able to record a response of 'agree' or 'strongly agree' in relation to the statement *The role of TAs is understood by teachers*. A limitation of the data is inevitably that different schools were represented at the head teacher and SENCO seminars and the teacher INSET, but viewed simply in terms of the differing proportions this would suggest a different perspective between senior leaders and classroom practitioners.

There are clear indications from the data that those attending the teacher INSET were caused to re-appraise their views of their school's current practice in relation to forms of TA deployment, the time devoted to particular TA activities and the effectiveness of these. Approximately one third (32.6%) of respondents indicated that they planned to make changes to their practice and 37.1% indicated that they may make changes after some thought. In assessing the impact of the INSET, this would suggest that there has been a post training reaction in terms of some changes

in thinking that are likely to act as the precursors to changes in individuals' practice and broader organisational impact.

Chapter 4: Head Teacher and SENCO three month follow up questionnaire

Key Points

- The response rate for this questionnaire was quite low so relatively large percentage differences in particular views are attributable to a small number of people. Any discussion of patterns or comparison across data sets is necessarily tentative.
- In the third questionnaire there was an increase in the proportion of respondents indicating that their school's practice was 'good or 'outstanding'. It was also notable that there was an increase in the number of respondents indicating their practice 'requires improvement' in the post seminar questionnaire.
- In relation to all areas of activity except *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* there was an increase in the three month follow up questionnaire in those recording a response of 'about right' compared to the post seminar questionnaire.
- In the case of all areas of TA activity the number of respondents recording a response of 'very effective' in the three month follow up questionnaire increased. The largest gains were in relation to *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*. This could indicate that over the period of time since attendance at the head teacher and SENCO seminars practice related to within class support had developed.
- Comparison between the pre seminar data and the three month follow up questionnaire data suggests there is greater confidence in relation to communication between teachers and TAs but the different sample sizes could also explain the differences.
- In the three month follow up questionnaire for those who attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars 63.8% of respondents indicated that an action plan had been drawn up or new actions incorporated into an existing plan.
- In the three month follow up, 29.8% of the 47 respondents who completed it indicated that their teachers attended/received INSET provided by the Teaching Schools.
- The majority of respondents (57.4%) felt the project had some degree of positive impact. In the case of 6.4% they felt this was a 'major impact'.
- The head teachers and SENCOs considered there had been improvements in relation to the eight forms of TA deployment listed within the three month follow up questionnaire. The areas where most improvement was noted were *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN*, *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*.
- Some individual respondents commented on the value of exposure to the research on effective use of TAs and the insight it provided into practice outside of the their own school.

Introduction

The three month follow up questionnaires were distributed with the intention of gauging the longer term impact of schools' engagement with the Inspired Educators project. Within this chapter the term *three month follow up questionnaire* is used but it should be noted that the trigger for distribution was three months after teachers from the school had received their last input from the Teaching School. More than three months would have elapsed between attendance by any school representative at the head teacher and SENCO seminar and the distribution of this questionnaire.

As outlined in the *Methodology* section of this report, the poor response rate for this phase of the evaluation meant that the data gathered was of limited use for comparison with responses gathered at the previous two data collection points. Though the 47 responses from those attending the head teacher and SENCO seminars represent a reasonable sample, these respondents are probably not representative of the population (i.e. all those senior managers who engaged with the project). Table 4.1 illustrates the major reduction in responses from those who attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars across in the three month follow up questionnaire.

Date	Location	% (N)		
		Pre	Post	3 months
03.10.13	Swiss Cottage School	11.2% (31)	7.9% (21)	17.0% (8)
29.10.13	Forest Way School	10.8% (30)	13.1% (35)	8.5% (4)
13.11.13	Fiveways School (The Partnership Teaching School)	17.7% (49)	16.9% (45)	21.3% (10)
19.11.13	Notre Dame High School	11.9% (33)	11.6% (31)	12.8% (6)
21.11.13	The Loyne Specialist School	6.9% (19)	8.2% (22)	2.1% (1)
25.11.13	Town End Academy	9.4% (26)	8.6% (23)	2.1% (1)
24.02.14	Fosseway (The Partnership Teaching School)	8.7% (24)	11.2% (30)	8.5% (4)
3.02.14	Fiveways School (The Partnership Teaching School)	11.2% (31)	14.2% (38)	21.2% (10)
28.01.14	Swiss Cottage School	5.4% (15)	8.2% (22)	-

Table 4.1 Response rates from those who attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars across the three data collection points

In view of the sample size this chapter only comments on the views of those who returned the three month follow up questionnaire. In interpreting data presented in this chapter it should also be recognised that not all 47 respondents completed all questions and also sometimes missed out parts of individual questions.

Where comparison is made across the three data collection points it is restricted to just those few respondents who provided data at each of these. In the case of those who attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars, 21 people completed all three questionnaires. These staff represented 19 different schools. Even amongst the group of 21 who completed all three questionnaires there was variation in the number completing each question.

Some parallels are drawn with responses of the wider group at the previous two data collection points where appropriate, but it is important to regard those who

responded to the three month follow up questionnaire as illustrative cases rather than representative.

Views on current practice in the use of TAs

Table 4.2 sets out just the responses from those who attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars and completed all three questionnaires. It is encouraging that three months later, none of these individuals identified their practice as 'Inadequate'. There were increases in the numbers rating their schools as 'outstanding' or 'good' and a reduction in those recording that practice 'requires improvement'. The data also conforms to the anticipated pattern that immediately post seminar a degree of doubt had developed regarding the quality of practice, followed by a more positive view once developments had the opportunity to take effect. However any interpretation of this nature needs to be made with a degree of caution as 11 skipped this question in the pre seminar questionnaire. It is impossible to say with any certainty how, if they had responded, their responses would have been distributed across the response options. It is possible to say with more certainty that in the period between attendance at the seminar and the three month follow up questionnaire the 21 who responded held a more positive view of their school's practice with regard to their use of TAs.

View of Practice	Pre Seminar % (N)	Post Seminar % (N)	Three months % (N)
Outstanding:	4.8% (1)	4.8% (1)	14.3% (3)
Good:	38.1% (8)	38.1% (8)	61.9% (13)
Requires improvement:	4.8% (1)	42.9% (9)	13.8% (5)
Inadequate:	0	9% (2)	0

Table 4.2: Views of head teachers and SENCOs completing all three questionnaires on the quality of the school's practice at each data collection point

In the terms of the full 47 respondents who returned the three month follow up questionnaire 14.9% (7) rated their school's practice as 'outstanding', 59.6% (28) as 'good' and 17.0% (8) as 'requires improvement'.

Perspectives on TA time devoted to specific activities

Within the three month follow up questionnaire those who had attended the head and SENCO seminars were asked to comment again on the amount of TA time devoted to specific activities. The premise was that, having made changes as a result of engagement in the Inspired Educators project, a higher proportion would record responses of 'about right'. As Table 4.3 shows, in relation to all activities less than half of the 21 who responded to all three head teacher and SENCO questionnaires considered the length of time devoted to each activity to be 'about right' in the pre seminar questionnaire. This question suffered from a lot of non-responses; for each area of TA activity listed 12 individuals did not provide a response.

Use of Teaching Assistants	Not Sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	-	2, 9.5%	2, 9.5%	4, 19%	1, 4.8%
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	-	1, 4.8%	-	7, 33.3%	1, 4.8%
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	-	-	2, 9.5%	7, 33.3%	-
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	-	-	1, 4.8%	7, 33.3%	4.8%. 1
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	-	-	1, 4.8%	8, 38.1%	-
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	-	-	-	6, 28.6%	3, 14.3%
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	-	-	-	5, 23.8%	4, 19%
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	-	1, 4.8%	1, 4.8%	5, 23.8%	2,9.5%

Table 4.3: Views of head teachers and SENCOs completing all three questionnaires on the TIME devoted to particular TA activities (pre seminar questionnaire)

A more comprehensive set of data was available for the post seminar questionnaire (see Table 4.4). Of the 21 who completed all three questionnaires, this set of questions was answered by 19 or 20 individuals. The comparison with pre seminar data is of limited value because of the quantity of missing data. In its own right, the post seminar data shows that the largest proportion of responses were in the 'about right' column but a number of respondents have recorded responses of 'too much' or 'too little'. This demonstrates awareness that current modes of deployment are not as well balanced as they could be. A point worthy of particular note is that in relation to *Administration (including training/meetings)* and *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN*, more respondents recorded responses of 'too much' or 'too little' than recorded a response of 'about right'. In response to *Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN*, *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN out of class* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class* as many respondents recorded a response of either 'too much' or 'too little' as recorded a response of 'about right'.

In the three month follow up questionnaire the set of questions regarding time allocated to particular TA activities was answered by 19 or more of the 21 individuals who completed all three head teacher and SENCO questionnaires (see Table 4.5). The very similar sample size for the post seminar and three month follow up questionnaires allows for more meaningful comparison.

Use of Teaching Assistants	Not Sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	1, 4.8%	3, 14.3%	4, 19.0%	7, 33.3%	5, 23.8%
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	1, 4.8%	3, 14.3%	4, 19.0%	7, 33.3%	5, 23.8%
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	-	-	8, 38.1%	12, 57.1%	-
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	1, 4.8%	-	6, 28.6%	10, 47.6%	2, 9.5%
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	-	2, 9.5%	6, 28.6%	11, 52.4%	-
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	-	3, 14.3%	6, 28.6%	8, 38.1%	2, 9.5%
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	-	3, 14.3%	3, 14.3%	8, 38.1%	5, 23.8%
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	-	1, 4.8%	5, 23.8%	10, 47.6%	3, 14.3%

Table 4.4: Views of head teachers and SENCOs completing all three questionnaires on the time devoted to particular TA activities (post seminar questionnaire)

Use of Teaching Assistants	Not Sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	-	1, 4.8%	1, 4.8%	14, 66.7%	4, 19.0%
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	-	-	4, 19%	12, 57.1%	3, 14.3%
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	1, 4.8%	-	7, 33.3%	10, 47.6%	1, 4.8%
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	1, 4.8%	-	1, 4.8%	13, 61.9%	4, 19%
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	3, 14.3%	-	2, 9.5%	12, 57.1%	2, 9.5%
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	2, 9.5%	1, 4.8%	1, 4.8%	10, 47.6%	6, 28.6%
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	1, 4.8%	-	1, 4.8%	12, 57.1%	6, 28.6%
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	-	-	3, 14.3%	15, 71.4%	2, 9.5%

Table 4.5: Views of head teachers and SENCOs completing all three questionnaires on the time devoted to particular TA activities (Three month follow up questionnaire)

In relation to all areas of activity except *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class*, there has been an increase in the three month follow up questionnaire in those recording a response of 'about right' compared to the post seminar questionnaire. It is worthy to note that a third of those who responded to this felt that 'too much' time was devoted to *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class*. The implication is that for these respondents it was an area of activity that could be reduced. In the post seminar questionnaire eight respondents had indicated that 'too much' time was devoted to this activity and twelve that the time spent was 'about right'. In the three month follow up questionnaire the reduction to ten responses of 'about right' cannot be explained in terms of two individuals changing their view to 'too much' as only seven individuals gave this response. From the reasonably clear cut picture of respondents believing time devoted to this activity was 'about right' or 'too much' in the post seminar questionnaire responses now spread over 'not sure', 'about right', 'too much' and 'too little'.

It is also relevant to note that six individuals felt that too little time was devoted to *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN out of class* and *Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN*. This may provide an indication of areas where the schools may prioritise future development work.

The responses of the 21 who completed all three head teacher and SENCO questionnaires can be viewed in the wider context of the 47 who completed the third questionnaire (see Table 4.6)

Use of Teaching Assistants	Not Sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	-	4.3% (1)	6.4% (3)	61.7% (29)	12.8% (6)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	4.3% (2)	-	19.1% (9)	55.3% (26)	6.4% (3)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	4.3% (2)	-	19.1% (9)	55.3% (26)	4.3% (2)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	2.1% (1)	-	6.4% (3)	61.7% (29)	14.9% (7)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	6.4% (3)	-	17.0% (8)	55.3% (26)	6.4% (3)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	4.3% (2)	2.1% (1)	8.5% (4)	51.1% (24)	19.1% (9)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	-	2.1% (1)	6.4% (3)	51.1% (24)	23.4% (11)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	4.3% (2)	-	6.4% (3)	68.1% (32)	4.3% (2)

Table 4.6: Views of all head teachers and SENCOs who completed the three month follow up questionnaire on the time devoted to particular TA activities.

Just as with the smaller group of respondents to all three questionnaires, the full group of 47 respondents returned a high proportion of 'about right' responses, indicating they felt secure in the balance between different methods of deployment. The hope would be that as a result of engaging with the Inspired Educators project they had looked at their practice and reviewed modes of deployment where necessary and arrived at position where they felt confident in the balance. With the exception of *Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)*, it is important to recognise that for all areas of activity between 20% and 30% of respondents indicated they might be devoting either 'too much' or 'too little' time to these. It does not seem therefore that all respondents had yet reached a point where they felt secure in how they were using the TA time available to them. This may be because not enough time had elapsed and they were still engaged in a process of change.

Perspectives on the effectiveness of specific activities

The three month follow up questionnaire for those who had attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars explored perceptions of the effectiveness of different forms of TA deployment. The responses from the 47 respondents who completed the three month follow up questionnaire are shown in Table 4.7.

It is evident that among those completing the three month follow up questionnaire there was a degree of reticence in selecting 'very effective'. *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* attracted the highest percentage of 'very effective' responses. The assumption behind the question was that respondents would make a general, abstract appraisal of the typical effectiveness of a particular mode of deployment in the sense of believing it might be better practice to use TAs for one type of activity rather than another. As has been raised previously within this report, effectiveness is an interpretable construct and judgements made may also be influenced by school based variables. This may explain the relatively small proportion of 'very effective' responses. It may be, for example, that respondents were taking into account the fact that not all approaches are likely to be effective with all pupils or when carried out by a particular adult.

A different picture emerges if the 'somewhat effective and 'very effective' are combined. With the exception of *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN out of class* where 60.2% of the 47 who could have responded to this question felt it was 'somewhat effective' or 'very effective' for all other areas of activity the combined percentage is around or exceeds two thirds. The implication of the combined 'somewhat effective' or 'very effective' responses is that the majority felt that every form of TA activity was effective to some degree. It did not seem that through engagement with the Inspired Educators the heads and SENCOs who completed the third questionnaire had developed a view that there was a particular type of activity that was inherently 'ineffective'. That only about a fifth felt *Administration (including training/meetings)* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN out of class* were 'very effective' is worthy of note as this is considerably lower than the proportions indicating other areas were 'very effective'. However, looked at from the combined perspective, 68.0% and 65.9% respectively consider these to be 'somewhat effective' and 'very effective'.

Activity	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	2.1% (1)	10.6% (5)	4.3% (2)	48.9% (23)	19.1% (9)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	2.1% (1)	8.5% (4)	8.5% (4)	40.4% (19)	27.7% (13)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	-	8.5% (4)	4.3% (2)	31.9% (15)	42.9% (20)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	-	4.3% (2)	-	48.9% (23)	34.0% (16)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	-	8.5% (4)	8.5% (4)	40.4% (19)	29.8% (14)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	2.1% (1)	10.6% (5)	6.4% (3)	46.8% (22)	19.1% (9)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	4.3% (2)	6.4% (3)	2.1% (1)	36.2% (17)	36.2% (17)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	-	4.3% (2)	10.6% (5)	40.4% (19)	27.7% (13)

Table 4.7: Views of all head teachers and SENCOs who completed the three month follow up questionnaire on the effectiveness of TA use in relation to particular activities

The purpose of this question within the third questionnaire was to allow comparison of responses at the three data collection points. Of the 21 head teachers and SENCOs who completed all three questionnaires 10 responded to the effectiveness question within the pre seminar questionnaire (see Table 4.8)

The low response rate is problematic as there were more respondents who did not answer this question than did. While recognising the very small number reflected here, it is interesting to note that there is a degree of reticence in recording a response of 'very effective' that was also evident in the full set of data from 277 respondents who completed the pre seminar questionnaire. There is also the parallel that for most activities most responses fell in the 'somewhat effective' or 'very effective' categories. In the post seminar questionnaire the effectiveness question was completed by 18 or 19⁵ out of the 21 who completed all three questionnaires (Table 4.9).

⁵ Not every individual gave a response for each area of TA activity within this question

Activity	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	9.5% (2)	-	-	38.1% (8)	-
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	-	-	-	28.6% (6)	19.0% (4)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	-	-	-	13.8% (5)	13.8% (5)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	-	4.8% (1)	-	28.6% (6)	14.3% (3)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	-	-	-	28.6% (6)	19.0% (4)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	-	4.8% (1)	-	28.6% (6)	14.3% (3)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	-	4.8% (1)	-	6, 28.6% (6)	3, 14.3% (3)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	-	-	-	28.6% (6)	14.3% (3)

Table 4.8: Views of head teachers and SENCOs completing all three questionnaires on the EFFECTIVENESS of TA use in relation to particular activities (pre seminar questionnaire)

The difference in the number of respondents completing the effectiveness question in the pre and post seminar question means direct comparison is of limited value. It is clear that the combination of some of the original 10 respondents either changing their view or keeping it the same and additional responses of those who had not completed the pre seminar questionnaire still presented a general picture of a majority considering all areas of activity to be 'somewhat effective' or 'very effective'. For the 8 or 9 additional respondents it is impossible to know whether their view expressed in the post seminar questionnaire represents a change from the view they would have recorded in the pre seminar questionnaire if they had completed this question.

Of the 21 head teachers and SENCOs who completed all three questionnaires, 20 responded to the effectiveness question within three month follow up questionnaire (see Table 4.10). In the case of all areas of TA activity the number of respondents recording a response of 'very effective' increased. The largest gains were in relation to *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*. While this is a small sample it would suggest that over the period of time since attendance at the head teacher and SENCO seminars there has been a change in the view of the effectiveness of in class support due to changes in practice.

Activity	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	19% (4)	19% (4)	14.3% (3)	33.3% (7)	4.8% (1)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	9.5% (2)	-	4.8% (1)	71.4% (15)	4.8% (1)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	-	19.0% (4)	9.5% (2)	61.9% (13)	-
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	4.8% (1)	-	4.8% (1)	81% (17)	-
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	9.5% (2)	19% (4)	4.8% (1)	52.4% (11)	4.8% (1)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	14.3% (3)	4.8% (1)	4.8% (1)	61.9% (13)	4.8% (1)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	14.3% (3)	14.3% (3)	-	42.9% (9)	14.3% (3)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	9.5% (2)	2, 9.5% (2)	9.5% (2)	52.4% (2)	9.5% (2)

Table 4.9: Views of head teachers and SENCOs completing all three questionnaires on the effectiveness of TA use in relation to particular activities (post seminar questionnaire)

Activity	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	-	23.8% (5)	9.5% (2)	42.9% (9)	19% (4)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	4.8% (1)	9.5% (2)	9.5% (2)	47.6% (10)	23.8% (5)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	-	14.3% (3)	4.8% (1)	38.1% (8)	38.1% (8)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	-	4.8% (1)	-	57.1% (12)	33.3% (7)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	-	9.5% (2)	14.3% (3)	47.6% (10)	23.8% (5)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	4.8% (1)	14.3% (3)	9.5% (2)	52.4% (11)	14.3% (3)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	9.5% (2)	9.5% (2)	-	47.6% (10)	28.6% (6)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	-	9.5% (2)	-	61.9% (13)	23.8% (5)

Table 4.10: Views of head teachers and SENCOs completing all three questionnaires on the EFFECTIVENESS of TA use in relation to particular activities (Three month follow up questionnaire)

Perspectives on communication between teachers and TAs

Within the pre seminar questionnaire a not entirely positive picture regarding communication had been presented by responses from those attending the seminar for head teachers and SENCOs. The highest proportion of respondents indicating a level of agreement with any statement was 47.6% (for *Teachers are able to work with/manage TAs effectively*). As Table 4.11 illustrates, the nine or ten⁶ head teachers and SENCOs from the 21 who completed all three questionnaires seemed to broadly reflect the views of this wider group. It is impossible to predict how the missing 11 or 12 respondents who completed all three questionnaires but not all parts of this question in the pre seminar questionnaire would have responded. With this caveat in mind, it is still of interest that none of those who did respond recorded a response of 'strongly agree' for any of the statements. As in the main data from the head teacher and SENCO pre seminar questionnaire the proportion of respondents disagreeing that *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs* and *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms* was relatively high, albeit in this smaller data set due to the views of a very few individuals.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers are able to work with/manage TAs effectively	9.5% (2)	9.5% (2)	4.8% (1)	23.8% (5)	-
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom	-	9.5% (2)	-	33.3% (7)	-
Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs	-	28.6% (6)	4.8% (1)	14.3% (3)	-
Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms	-	23.8% (5)	9.5% (2)	14.3% (3)	-
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom	-	14.3% (3)	-	33.3% (7)	-
Teachers receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions	-	13.8% (5)	9.5% (2)	14.3% (3)	-
Communication between teachers and TAs is good	4.8% (1)	9.5% (2)	4.8% (1)	28.6% (6)	-

Table 4.11: Views of head teachers and SENCOs completing all three questionnaires on communication between TAs and Teachers (pre seminar questionnaire)

In the post seminar questionnaire head teachers and SENCOs were asked via an indication of a level of agreement whether they considered the school needed to develop its practice in relation to any of these areas. Out of the 21 head teachers and SENCOs who completed all three questionnaires 20 completed the

⁶ Not all of those answering this question responded to all parts

communication and preparedness question in the three month follow up questionnaire (see Table 4.12).

The missing data from the pre seminar questionnaire means it is difficult to make any meaningful comparisons between views expressed at that point and areas for development identified within the post seminar questionnaire. However as with the data from the full group of 267 heads and SENCOs who completed the post seminar questionnaire, there is a strong indication that practice is in need of development. The lowest level of agreement with the suggestion that practice is in need of development was in relation to *How well TAs are informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom*. Even in response to this statement the level of agreement is high, with two thirds of respondents agreeing. For all other statements the combined 'agree' and strongly agree' responses exceeded 75%. In light of this apparent recognition of a need for development, the hope would be that by the time the three month follow up questionnaire was completed practice would have improved in these areas and this would be reflected in the responses. Out of 21 head teachers and SENCOs who completed all three questionnaires, 20 responded to this question in the three month follow up questionnaire (Table 4.13).

We need to develop our practice in relation to:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers ability to work with/manage TAs effectively	4.8% (1)	-	-	33.3% (7)	57.1% (12)
How well TAs are informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom	4.8% (1)	-	4.8% (1)	47.6% (10)	38.1% (8)
The opportunities teachers have to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs	4.8% (1)	9.5% (2)	4.8% (1)	38.1% (8)	38.1% (8)
The opportunities teachers have to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms	4.8% (1)	4.8% (1)	-	47.6% (10)	38.1% (8)
How well TAs are informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom	4.8% (1)	14.2% (3)	4.8% (1)	33.3% (7)	33.3% (7)
The feedback teachers receive from TA led interventions	4.8% (1)	9.5% (2)	4.8% (1)	33.3% (7)	42.9% (9)
The quality of communication between teachers and TAs	4.8% (1)	2, 9.5% (1)	-	10, 47.6% (10)	7, 33.3% (7)
Teachers understanding of effective methods of utilise TAs to support/work with pupils with SEN	4.8% (1)	4.8% (1)	-	38.1% (8)	47.6% (10)

Table 4.12: Views of head teachers and SENCOs completing all three questionnaires on areas related to teacher/TA communication where practice needed to develop (post seminar questionnaire)

The number of 'strongly agree' responses is relatively low in relation to all areas, but the number of 'agree' responses is quite high. Looked at in terms just of the indication of a level of agreement, the majority selected either 'agree' or 'strongly agree' in response to five out of the eight areas. The areas where less than half indicated a level of agreement were *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs*, *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms* and *Teachers receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions*. As might be anticipated, these areas also drew quite high levels of disagreement. The lowest level of disagreement with any statement was in response to *Teachers are able to work with/manage TAs effectively* and the highest level in response to *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs* and *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms*.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers are able to work with/manage TAs effectively	-	14.3% (3)	19.0% (4)	47.6% (10)	14.3% (3)
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom	-	23.8% (5)	9.5% (2)	42.9% (9)	19% (4)
Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs	9.5% (2)	38.1% (8)	19% (4)	19% (4)	9.5% (2)
Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms	4.8% (1)	42.9% (9)	19.0% (4)	14.3% (3)	9.5% (2)
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom	-	19% (4)	19% (4)	52.4% (11)	4.8% (1)
Teachers receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions	-	42.9% (9)	1.0% (4)	33.3% (7)	-
Communication between teachers and TAs is good	-	23.8% (5)	4.8% (1)	47.6% (10)	19.0% (4)
Teachers have an understanding of effective methods to utilise TAs	48% (1)	14.3% (3)	23.8% (5)	38.1% (8)	14.3% (3)

Table 4.13: Views of head teachers and SENCOs completing all three questionnaires on communication between TAs and Teachers (three month follow up questionnaire)

The implication of these findings is that amongst this group of 20 heads and SENCOs there is a feeling by some that there is still work to be done in developing their practice. At the simple level of a comparison between the pre seminar data (Table 4.11) and the three month follow up questionnaire data (Table 4.13) it is possible to tentatively suggest that there is greater confidence in practice. The unknown factor that means such a suggestion can only be very tentative is the potential effect of the missing 11 or 12 respondents from the pre seminar

questionnaire. Their responses in the pre seminar questionnaire could have altered the picture of change presented by the comparison of the two sets of data.

The data related to the 21 heads and SENCOs who completed all three questionnaires can be viewed in the wider context of the data from the full group of 47 who completed the third questionnaire (see Table 4.14). Amongst this wider group it is clear that the greatest concerns exist in relation to *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs*, *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms* and *Teachers receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions*. For all three of these, the proportion of respondents indicating a level of agreement ('agree' or 'strongly agree') was below 50%. In relation to *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs* and *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms*, the level of disagreement ('disagree' or 'strongly disagree') exceeded 40%.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers are able to work with/manage TAs effectively	-	14.9% (7)	12.8% (6)	46.8% (22)	14.9% (7)
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom	-	17.0% (8)	10.6% (5)	42.6% (20)	17.5% (8)
Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs	4.3% (2)	42.6% (20)	14.9% (7)	19.1% (9)	8.5% (4)
Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms	2.1% (1)	42.6% (20)	12.8% (6)	19.1% (9)	10.6% (5)
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom	-	23.4% (11)	14.9% (7)	42.6% (20)	8.5% (4)
Teachers receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions	-	31.9% (15)	21.3% (10)	31.9% (15)	4.3% (2)
Communication between teachers and TAs is good	-	19.1% (9)	8.5% (4)	42.6% (20)	19.1% (9)
Teachers have an understanding of effective methods to utilise TAs	2.1% (1)	12.8% (6)	19.1% (9)	44.7% (21)	10.6% (5)

Table 4.14: Views of all head teachers and SENCOs who completed the three month follow up questionnaire on communication between TAs and Teachers

Action Planning

In the post seminar questionnaire 80.9% of respondents had indicated that they would be developing an action plan and 6.0% indicated that TA use was already part of their school improvement plan (or other action plan). This presented an encouraging picture in terms of an intent to implement changes in response to the input received. In the three month follow up questionnaire for those who attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars, 63.8% of respondents indicated that an action plan had been drawn up or new actions incorporated into an existing plan. When asked in the three month follow up questionnaire which, from a choice of areas best described their action points, only three areas were identified. As can be seen from Table 4.15 below, predominantly this related to the use of TAs to provide general in class support, with a particular focus on SEN.

Actions	N (%)
How we use TAs to provide in class general support with a focus on those with SEN	61.7 (29)
How we use TAs to support/work with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	2.1% (1)
How we use TAs to support/work with groups of children with SEN in class	12.8% (6)

Table 4.15: The broad focus of action planning undertaken

An important hoped for action in relation to the Inspired Educators project was that those schools represented at the head teacher and SENCO seminars also accessed training via the Teaching Schools for their teachers. In the three month follow up, 29.8% of the 47 respondents who completed it indicated that their teachers attended/received INSET provided by the teaching school. Given the model of delivery upon which the Inspired Educators project was based, this is a lower proportion than might have been expected. However it is possible that, for the 68.1% who indicated that they did not take advantage of the INSET on offer, the seminar provided sufficient impetus to take forward developments in their schools.

Impact on Practice

In the three month follow up questionnaire those who attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars were asked to identify any changes or key impacts since their schools involvement in the project.

As can be seen in Table 4.16 there were only two areas (*Teachers are clearer about what represents good practice in TA deployment* and *I am more confident that our use of TAs represents value for money*) where more than 50% of respondents agreed ('strongly agree' or 'agree') there had been improvements in practice. The more positive interpretation is that in 12 areas at least one third agreed there had been an improvement. The proportion of 'neither agree nor disagree' responses is quite high for all items. When asked to provide additional comments, a number of respondents noted that changes were still under review and this might explain some of these 'neither agree nor disagree' responses. However it may also indicate that in some cases schools do not have a means of evaluating the impact of any changes they have made in relation to the areas the questionnaire asked them about.

Perceived Changes	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers are clearer about what represents good practice in TA deployment	4.3% (2)	-	19.1% (9)	48.9% (23)	4.3% (2)
Teachers are aware of a broader range of effective methods of TA deployment	4.3% (2)	-	25.5% (12)	38.3% (18)	8.5% (4)
Teachers are more confident that the ways they utilise TAs within their lessons represent good practice	4.3% (2)	-	34.0% (16)	27.7% (13)	10.6% (5)
Teachers work with/manage TAs more effectively	4.3% (2)	-	38.3% (18)	21.3% (10)	12.8% (6)
Teachers are better at briefing TAs on the support they need to provide within their lessons	4.3% (2)	2.1% (1)	29.8% (14)	31.9% (15)	6.4% (3)
The quality and/or quantity of feedback TAs provide for teachers has improved	4.3% (2)	6.4% (3)	29.8% (14)	27.7% (13)	6.4% (3)
Teachers' lesson planning shows they are better at planning for the use of TAs	4.3% (2)	4.3% (2)	34.0% (16)	23.4% (11)	8.5% (4)
TAs have a better understanding of their role within lessons	4.3% (2)	-	27.7% (13)	34.0% (16)	8.5% (4)
As a school we are better able to show the impact of TAs on the quality of teaching and learning	4.3% (2)	4.3% (2)	25.5% (12)	31.9% (15)	8.5% (4)
Teachers' working relationship with TAs has improved	4.3% (2)	-	34.0% (16)	29.8% (14)	6.4% (3)
The TAs have grown in confidence	4.3% (2)	-	23.4% (11)	31.9% (15)	14.9% (7)
I am more confident that our use of TAs represents value for money	4.3% (2)	4.3% (2)	14.9% (7)	38.9% (18)	12.8% (6)

Table 4.16: Perceived changes in the attitudes and work of Teachers and TAs by respondents to the Heads and SENCOs three month follow up questionnaire

Those who attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars were also given the opportunity to identify any changes or key impacts since their schools involvement in the project. These are shown below:

- *Dedicated time to plan together.*
- *Our TAs have always played a vital role but now they're taking the subject lead in some areas of the curriculum. Trouble is they now want to become teachers and leave us!*
- *Regular training by SENCO for TAs.*
- *TAs more likely to highlight their own INSET needs.*
- *TAs receive feedback with teacher after lesson observation (if appropriate).*
- *Whole staff teacher training following the use of TA survey. TA uses improved but this needs embedding and unless there is continued focus teachers tend to slip into old ways. Provision for next year is much more closely targeted and TAs and teachers have been given a very clear set of guidelines about*

the progress that the students are expected to make. If teachers have not planned properly for the TA this support will be reallocated. Heads of department are to be more accountable for the monitoring of TA use.

Those who attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars were asked directly in the three month follow up questionnaire whether they believed the effectiveness of different types of TA activity had improved since involvement in the project. As can be seen from Table 4.17, in all areas respondents believed there had been improvements. The areas where most improvement was noted was *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN, Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*.

Activity	Never Been Used	Not Sure	No change	Minor Improvement	Substantial Improvement
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	4.3% (2)	-	19.1% (9)	40.4% (19)	8.5% (4)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	-	2.1% (1)	21.3% (10)	36.2% (17)	12.8% (6)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	-	2.1% (1)	17.0% (8)	40.4% (19)	10.6% (5)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	4.3% (2)	-	22.5% (12)	29.8% (14)	12.8% (6)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	2.1% (1)	2.1% (1)	21.3% (10)	40.4% (19)	6.4% (3)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	2.1% (1)	2.1% (1)	27.7% (13)	23.4% (11)	17.0% (8)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	2.1% (1)	-	42.6% (20)	21.3% (10)	6.4% (3)

Table 4.17: Views of respondents to the Heads and SENCOs on improvements in the EFFECTIVENESS of TA use in three month follow up questionnaire

Responses from those completing the three month follow up questionnaire also presented a reasonably positive picture regarding overall impact of engagement with the project. As Table 4.17 shows the majority of respondents (57.4%) felt the project had a positive impact. In case of 6.4% they felt this was a 'Major Impact'. It should be noted that 12 of the 47 respondents who completed the three month follow up questionnaire did not answer this question. Their views could have affected the proportions depending on the distribution of responses across the six response options.

Level of Impact	% (N)
A major impact , with clearly identifiable changes in our practice across the school	6.4% (3)
Some impact , with some specific areas of practice being strengthened	34.0% (16)
Some impact at the level of thinking about ways of using TAs, but no discernible changes in practice	17.0% (8)
Minimal impact because the training confirmed our practice was already very good in this area	12.8% (2)
Minimal or no impact because the training provided did not address our needs	4.3% (2)
Minimal or no impact because we have other, more pressing, school improvement priorities currently	8.5% (4)

Table 4.17: Perceived impact of the Mencap Inspired Educators project expressed in the three month follow up questionnaire for Heads and SENCOs

The opportunity was also provided for respondents to record additional comments related to overall impact. These are shown below:

- *Answer to point 14 not a criticism but a comment on where we are in our SEN development at this time.*
- *A major impact, with clearly identifiable changes in our practice across the school.*
- *Changes may be implemented at a later date.*
- *Due to major staffing changes the work we want to implement has been put on hold until September 2014.*
- *It will happen but it is a slow process to get it right.*
- *Some impact, with some specific areas of practice being strengthened.*
- *Some impact at the level of thinking about ways of using TAs, but no discernible changes in practice.*
- *Staff training planned for September.*
- *The first point is what I am aiming for over a year of implementation and the level of work we are putting into this.*
- *This will be a more long term piece of work.*
- *This is because of where we are in the development cycle.*
- *Minimal impact because the training confirmed our practice was already very good in this area.*
- *Minimal or no impact because the training provided did not address our needs.*
- *Minimal or no impact because we have other, more pressing, school improvement priorities currently.*
- *We had already stated some of these changes but the training confirmed that we were on the right lines.*

Although only a limited number provided a comment, these did help to clarify some of the evaluations in Table 4.17. In these comments it is often reassuring to note that changes are planned, even though some may not happen until the next academic year. This suggests that even if impact had not been felt immediately, respondents for the most part saw the value in the project and intended to take action in response to it.

Further support to facilitate change

Those who had attended the seminars for Heads and SENCOs were also asked to select from a range of options the additional support that might help if they had so far been unable to make the changes proposed at the start of the project (see Table 4.18).

The most popular of these was *Staff training event(s) – within school* (19.1%). The proportionally higher popularity of this form of support may be because it allows the staff group to experience the same input and to collectively consider its implications in the context of their own school. The implication of the question is that this additional support comes from outside the school and so a further factor influencing the higher numbers selecting this response may be the possible benefits associated with training being delivered in school but by somebody other than the school's own staff.

Additional Support	% (N)
Additional Seminars	4.3% (2)
Staff training event(s) – regionally	2.1% (1)
Staff training event(s) – within school	19.1% (9)
Networking opportunities	6.4% (3)
On-line resources	6.4% (3)
Training packs	8.5% (4)
Other (free response option)	
Time	2.1% (1)
Further input	2.1% (1)

Table 4.18: Additional support request to facilitate further change.

Lessons learned

Those who attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars were asked to reflect on both the impact of the Inspired Educators project and lessons learned from it, to share with other schools interested in engaging with it in the future. In relation to how to get the most benefit from the project, respondents were asked to offer three pieces of advice. The collated responses are shown below

- *Allocate time for action planning.*
- *Use the research showing WHY TAs are not effective.*
- *Attend MENCAP training.*
- *Build a network locally for TAs.*
- *Communicate ideas to all staff - TAs and teachers.*
- *Dedicate a leader.*
- *Discussion time with other schools on the best deployment of TAs.*
- *Ensure a focus on the use of TAs is on the school development plan.*
- *Ensure all staff 'on-board'.*
- *Ensure you can act upon it soon afterwards.*
- *Follow up monitoring by SLT.*
- *Ensure all of the SLT are fully involved.*
- *Make sure senior management are on board from the start!*

- *Give quality time in staff meetings and in-house training to raise teacher understanding/ commitment to more effective use of TAs.*
- *Go to the presentation for head teachers and SENCOs*
- *Monitor Impact of interventions over time.*
- *Include effective management of TAs as part of teachers' performance management.*
- *Know a specific area you wish to improve.*
- *Make it a focus of lesson observations.*
- *Make sure it is in your school development plan.*
- *Make sure you know your intended outcomes.*
- *Make sure that you are able to review it regularly.*
- *More time for joint planning.*
- *Observations to review practice.*
- *Only attend when you are ready to get going on the project.*
- *More training on differentiation.*
- *Need to work hard to get all staff on board.*
- *Send more than one person.*
- *Send SENCO and member of SLT for training.*
- *Set a realistic action plan.*
- *Conduct a Skills audit.*
- *Talk to schools who have been involved.*
- *Teachers to do action plan.*
- *The book was very useful.*
- *The training resources, particularly the book, are invaluable.*
- *Think about the impact the least qualified have on the most needy.*
- *Look at how you can measure the impact.*
- *This is an area that needs addressing in developing outstanding teaching and learning at the school.*
- *To attend training.*
- *To be brave to try new things.*
- *To be reflective in your practice.*
- *Train teachers to understand impact of TAs and how they can support their effectiveness.*
- *Training and coaching.*
- *Try not to be disappointed with poor research; it is being used to support dictatorial government policy.*
- *Whole staff engagement.*
- *Write an action plan with dates.*

Those attending the Heads and SENCO seminars were also asked what advice they would give to another school on how to improve practice and use of TAs, when working with children with SEN. Their responses are shown below:

- *Audit how much teaching time is spent with SEN pupils*
- *Allow time to work with TAs on training*
- *Ask them what they need!*

- *Ask yourself what is expected of TAs in terms of outcomes? Are they suitably qualified?*
- *Be clear in your objectives and expectations for your TAs*
- *Be flexible*
- *Being aware of TA deployment in all parts of the lesson*
- *Build confidence through good training*
- *Carry out a detailed audit of use of TAs*
- *Clarity of 'learning' outcome rather than 'what they will be doing*
- *Class Teacher to work with SEN while TA supervises class on occasions*
- *Clear targets/ clear expectation for all children*
- *Consider the floating role of a TA whilst the teacher concentrates on some SEN*
- *Collaborate between each other; it has proved to be much more successful than a non specialist talking about research that they do not understand*
- *Communication between TAs and class teachers - Log books (Teachers can write instructions for TAs, TAs can respond)*
- *Developing the use of questioning and commenting through INSET training and peer observation*
- *Ensure TAs feel valued, don't assume they do*
- *Ensure in class support for pupils with SEN is more balanced - promoting independence rather than over reliance on an adult*
- *Ensure teachers are fully aware of their responsibilities so that they better direct TAs*
- *Ensure the TAs know the exact needs of the children they are working with*
- *Ensure they are very clear of their role*
- *Ensure that there is regular planning time for TAs*
- *Get them to take ownership*
- *Get staff to meet with TAs and complete paperwork together so that they are accountable*
- *Group work in class*
- *Invest in intervention programmes*
- *Less time with SEN children out of class*
- *Look at research to see what are the most effective ways, e.g. involvement in planning, expectation of feedback*
- *Look closely at impact*
- *Looking at whole class provision*
- *Make sure there is time to plan with the teacher they are working with*
- *Needs to be whole school ethos*
- *Offer a range of tasks and activities for them to do ensuring they feel well-supported*
- *SENCO needs to know exactly who is working with who and when!*
- *Staff training on effective use of TAs*
- *Take a step back and look at what is happening in classrooms*
- *Take your time as this could be a fundamental change*
- *Talk with the TAs - get them involved*
- *TAs to encourage independent learning*

- *Time for teachers and TAs to liaise - ensure they have adequate preparation and time to feed back to teachers*
- *Time to train teachers/TAs e.g. INSET/staff meetings*
- *Training opportunities are critical*
- *Ensure TAs are properly trained re needs and interventions*
- *We have incorporated 'learning habits' and are currently working on making sure that TAs 'notice' when children are using them. A bit of a script for learning.*

In the three month follow up questionnaire respondents were asked for their views on the least and most helpful aspects of the Inspired Educators project. The responses are shown below.

Most useful

- *Action planning for teachers.*
- *Being able to have a link with projects that are current and reflect national findings.*
- *The training.*
- *Best practice use. Excellent statistics. Reviewing TAs role.*
- *Bringing the research on the quality of TA impact to my attention prompted review and development in our school.*
- *Confirmed good practice.*
- *Learning that there are schools who use TAs differently.*
- *Reinforcing my thinking that teachers and TAs should be in partnership; given time and resources to plan and evaluate together.*
- *Looking at the role and expectations of TAs and really drilling down to what provision SEN children are getting.*
- *Looking at whole class provision and group provision.*
- *Networking through the one event attended.*
- *The overview and research with the supportive materials set out in the book*
- *The research which was flagged up helped to convince us all that we need to look at the practice and way in which we utilize our TAs.*
- *Being made aware of the statistics regarding TA questioning of pupils and how we as a school could improve this.*
- *Time to think and reflect on what we were doing. How to make good provision remain good or improve.*
- *Ways to maximise TA use - although as we are a very small school we have endeavoured to do that anyway.*

Least useful

- *Filling in forms although it does help you be reflective.*
- *Not really been able to implement a lot of changes. Interventions have been our focus this year.*
- *Paperwork.*
- *Presentation was not high quality - much of the statistical information which was presented by power point could have been shared more effectively.*
- *Some of the training was more relevant to mainstream schools or schools with more moderate SEN pupils.*

- *This is an outstanding school and effective use of TAs as a valuable resource has always been a priority.*

It needs to be recognised that most responses were made by a single person and so it is not possible to generalise from this. However it is interesting that a relatively high proportion of the responses relate to either awareness of the national research or a more general understanding of practice outside of the respondent's own school. Reassuringly there were few answers to the question asking respondents to identify the aspects of the project they found least useful.

Encouragingly, 68.1% of those who responded to the three month follow up questionnaire for Heads and SENCOs indicated that they would recommend the Mencap Inspired Educators project to a colleague or another school. Although one did also make the point 'the school has to have a good idea of how they want to improve their practice before attending'.

Summary Discussion

With only 47 completed three month follow up questionnaires returned in total, the response rate was relatively low, representing only approximately 18% of those who completed the head teacher and SENCO post seminar questionnaire. The number is a reasonable sample in itself but a number of key questions within the questionnaire relied on comparison across all three data collection points. Only 21 respondents completed all three questionnaires and not all of these completed every question within them, leading to variations in sample size between the three data collection points for this group. Any discussion of patterns or comparison across data sets within this chapter has necessarily been tentative. The intended comparison of responses across the three data collection points was only possible for those who had completed all three questionnaires and there can be no assumption that their views are representative of the much larger group of teachers who completed the pre and post INSET questionnaires. The main value of this data is in illustrating the experience of a limited number of head teachers, SENCOs and other senior leaders who had been exposed to the Inspired Educators project. Within these limitations there are some points that can be made regarding the impact of the project.

There is some evidence that, within the schools represented by respondents who completed all three questionnaires, engagement with the Inspired Educators project impacted positively on practice. In the third questionnaire there was an increase in the proportion of respondents indicating that their school's practice was 'good or 'outstanding'. The increase in the number of respondents indicating their practice 'requires improvement' in the post seminar questionnaire can also be interpreted as an indication that the seminar led to a questioning of practice. However it should be recognised that the differing sample sizes might also explain the increase in this response if, for example, those who did not answer it in the pre seminar questionnaire all selected 'requires improvement' in the post seminar questionnaire.

With the exception of *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* there was an increase in the three month follow up

questionnaire in those recording a response of 'about right' compared to the post seminar questionnaire in relation to the time devoted to all forms of TA deployment listed. This is a possible indication that engagement with the Inspired Educators project has led to changes in the amount of time devoted to specific activities or, if not changes, a reappraisal of time spent in relation to likely and actual impact.

In the case of all areas of TA activity, the number of respondents recording a response of 'very effective' in the three month follow up questionnaire increased. The largest gains were in relation to *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*. This could indicate that over the period of time since attendance at the head teacher and SENCO seminars action had been taken in the school that improved the quality of these forms of in class support, leading to this more positive appraisal of practice. The head teachers and SENCOs considered there had been improvements in relation to all eight forms of TA deployment listed within the three month follow up questionnaires. The areas where most improvement was noted was *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN*, *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*. Comparison between the pre seminar data and the three month follow up questionnaire data also suggested there was greater confidence in relation to communication between teachers and TAs but the different sample sizes could also explain the differences.

An important outcome from the head teacher and SENCO seminars was that those in senior positions who attended developed an action plan. The response from the 267 respondents who completed the post seminar questionnaire was encouraging on this point with 80.9% of respondents indicating that they would be developing an action plan and 6.0% indicated that TA use was already part of their school improvement plan (or other action plan). Amongst those who completed the three month follow up questionnaire this intention translated into 63.8% drawing up an action plan or incorporating new actions into an existing plan. It is, of course, impossible to say with any degree of certainty whether the group who completed the three month follow up questionnaire was representative of the full group of 267 who completed the post INSET questionnaire.

The majority of respondents (57.4%) considered that engagement with the Inspired Educators project had some degree of positive impact. In case of 6.4% they felt this was a 'Major Impact'. Some individual respondents commented on the value of exposure to the research on effective use of TAs and the insight it provided into practice outside of their own school.

Though not suffering from the very small sample size of the teachers' three month follow up questionnaire discussed in the next chapter, the low number of head teachers, SENCOs and other senior leaders responding to the third questionnaire means it is impossible to provide strong messages from this data about the impact of the Inspired Educators project based on changes across the three data collection points. There are some encouraging signs within this data, but overall the three month follow up questionnaire represented a missed opportunity for senior leaders to

make their voice heard with regard to the issue of TA deployment and the extent to which access to training and subsequent action planning in schools can address some of the nationally expressed criticisms of practice. Unlike the teacher questionnaire, the head teacher and SENCO questionnaire was sent directly to individual email addresses in virtually every case and so did not suffer from the problem of not having direct access to the intended recipient. Clearly there is a variety of reasons why individuals do not complete questionnaires. The design of the questionnaires may have been a factor. They were long and required the individual to dedicate a period of time to their completion. However an important message for the teaching profession arising from this evaluation may be that it is difficult for educational researchers to construct an evidence informed argument regarding the need for quality training without the engagement of key stakeholders.

Chapter 5: Teacher three month follow up questionnaire

Key Points

- The response rate for this questionnaire was very low so relatively large percentage differences in particular views are attributable to one or two people. Any discussion of patterns or comparison across data sets is necessarily tentative.
- Some individual respondents commented on the value of exposure to the research on the effective use of TAs and the opportunity to reflect on practice.
- There were a number of suggestions to other schools of possible ways to develop practice related to better communication.
- Around a third of those who responded to the three month follow up questionnaire indicated that there had been positive developments in relation to how they worked with TAs.
- The pattern of a reduced proportion of 'very effective' responses in relation to specific modes of deployment in the post INSET questionnaire, followed by an increase in the three month follow up questionnaire, could indicate some questioning of practice resulting from the INSET and positive changes subsequently.
- Around half of those who responded to the third questionnaire felt that within their schools there had been either minor or substantial improvement in relation to *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*. For all other areas of TA activity between 20% and 37% felt there had been some degree of improvement. These responses regarding the degree of improvement need to be viewed in the context of the post INSET questionnaire where the majority of respondents felt practice was already either 'somewhat effective' or 'very effective'.
- Unexpectedly amongst the 12 respondents who completed all three questionnaires the proportion of respondents indicating the time spent on specific activities in the three month follow up was 'about right' had decreased compared to the post INSET questionnaire. This was a different pattern to the head teachers and SENCOs where there was an increase in the three month follow up questionnaire in those recording a responses of 'about right' compared to the post seminar questionnaire.
- Proportionally the teachers were less positive about the overall impact of the project than those who completed the head teacher and SENCO three month follow up questionnaire.
- In the three month follow up questionnaire for teachers 42.1% of respondents indicated that they would recommend the Mencap Inspired Educators project to a colleague or another school and 10.2% said they would not.

Introduction

The three month follow up questionnaire for teachers was distributed with the intention of gauging the longer term impact of schools' engagement with the Inspired Educators project. The trigger for the distribution of these questionnaires was that three to four months had elapsed since the teachers from the school had received their last input from the Teaching School providing training in their area. As noted previously, difficulties in accessing email contact details meant that the three month principle could not be rigidly adhered to and so, in many cases, links to the questionnaire were sent in terms five and six via those who had attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars for distribution to teachers in their school. The questionnaire could be completed by any teacher in the school, whether or not they had attended training delivered by the Teaching School as the interest was in the impact of engagement with the project within the school rather than just on those individuals who had received direct input.

As outlined in the *Methodology* section of this report, the method of distribution is likely to have been the significant factor in the very low response rate of just 19 completed questionnaires from teachers. As this is such a small proportion of the overall number of teachers trained as part of the project comparison with the pre and post training questionnaire data is of limited value. It is very unlikely that these 19 individuals are representative of the overall population (i.e. all those teachers who engaged with the project). Therefore only comments on the views of those who returned the three month follow up questionnaire are made. Where comparison is made across the three data collection points it is restricted to just those few respondents who provided data at each of the data collection points. Of the 19 respondents who returned the teachers' three month follow up questionnaire, 12 had completed all three questionnaires. These staff represented 11 schools. None of these were the same as the 19 schools represented by those within the head teacher and SENCO three month follow up questionnaire who had completed all three questionnaires.

Some parallels are drawn with responses of the wider group at the previous two data collection points where appropriate but it is important to regard those who responded to the three month follow up questionnaire as illustrative cases rather than representative.

Teacher views on current practice in the use of TAs

None of the teachers who returned the three month follow up questionnaire identified their school's practice as inadequate, 10.5% (2) rated it as 'outstanding', 57.9% (11) as 'good' and 5.3% (1) as 'requires improvement'. It should be noted that of the 19 who returned the third questionnaire three did not complete this question. Nevertheless that the majority of respondents (68.4%) rated practice as 'good' or outstanding is positive. Though low numbers it is also possible to look at the data from just those who returned all three questionnaires (see Table 5.1).

View of Practice	Pre INSET % (N)	Post INSET % (N)	Three months % (N)
Outstanding:	0	0	8.3% (1)
Good:	75% (9)	75% (9)	58.3% (7)
Requires improvement:	8.3% (1)	25% (3)	8.3% (1)
Inadequate:	0	0	0

Table 5.1 Views of teachers completing all three questionnaires on the quality of the school's practice at each data collection point

No obvious pattern emerges from this. There are two more individuals who recorded 'Requires improvement' in the Post INSET questionnaire compared to the pre INSET and three month follow up questionnaires. This could indicate a change in view by two individuals but it should also be recognised that though all 12 responded to the question in the post INSET questionnaire, not all responded to the pre seminar and three month follow questionnaires. The change could therefore also be explained by some particular individuals answering in one questionnaire but not in another.

Perspectives on TA time devoted to specific activities

Teachers were asked to comment on the issue of TA time devoted to specific activities at each of the three data collection points. The full set of responses from the three month follow up questionnaire is shown in Table 5.2. In relation to *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class* the proportion selecting response of 'about right' was relatively high. It was notable too that *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN out of class*, *Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN* and *Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)* received a considerably lower proportion of 'about right' responses than other areas of TA activity.

The data available from the 12 teachers who completed all three questionnaires can also be analysed from the perspective of changes across the three data collection points. In the pre INSET questionnaire most of the 12 teachers who completed all three questionnaires felt time devoted to specific activities was 'about right' but a number did not (see Table 5.3). This mirrored the responses from those who attended the seminars for head teachers and SENCOs. In view of the small numbers it should be recognised that one or two respondents offering a different view could change the proportions significantly. This caveat is of particular importance because of the potential impact of the views of the three of the 12 who did not complete this question.

Use of Teaching Assistants	Not Sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	5.3% (1)	-	-	52.6% (10)	10.5% (2)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	-	-	10.5% (2)	57.9% (11)	-
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	-	-	-	68.4% (13)	-
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	-	-	-	62.3% (12)	5.3% (1)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	15.8% (3)	-	-	52.6% (10)	-
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	10.5% (2)	5.3% (1)	-	36.8% (7)	15.8% (3)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	5.3% (1)	-	10.5% (2)	21.1%(4)	31.6% (6)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	15.8% (3)	5.3% (1)	10.5% (2)	36.8% (7)	-

Table 5.2: Views of all teachers completing the three month follow up questionnaire on the time devoted to particular TA activities

Use of Teaching Assistants	Not Sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	16.7% (2)	-	-	50% (6)	16.7% (2)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	-	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	58.3% (7)	-
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	-	8.3% (1)	-	66.7% (8)	-
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	-	-	8.3% (1)	66.7% (8)	-
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	8.3% (1)	-	8.3% (1)	50% (6)	8.3% (1)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	8.3% (1)	-	8.3% (1)	50% (6)	8.3% (1)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	8.3% (1)	-	-	50% (6)	16.7% (2)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	-	58.3% (7)	-

Table 5.3: Views of teachers completing all three questionnaires on the time devoted to particular TA activities (pre INSET questionnaire)

When this is compared with the post seminar questionnaire (Table 5.4) it can be seen that the number of ‘about right’ responses decreased for *Administration (including training/meetings)* and remained the same for *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN* and *Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)* but increased for the five other TA activities. This could suggest that for some individuals the input received led them to feel reassured that the TA time devoted to these activities was ‘about right’ and reduced doubts they might have brought with them to the INSET about this. However, it should be recognised that in relation to most of the statements that form this question, nine respondents answered in the pre INSET questionnaire whereas 11 or 12 responded to it in the post INSET questionnaire. If the missing respondents had provided a response in the pre INSET questionnaire this could influence the conclusions that could be drawn from comparisons between the two sets of data.

Use of Teaching Assistants	Not Sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	33.3% (4)	-	8.3% (1)	33.3% (4)	-
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	-	8.3% (1)	16.7% (2)	58.3% (7)	8.3% (1)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	-	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	83.3% (10)	-
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	-	-	25% (3)	75% (9)	-
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	8.3% (1)	-	25% (3)	66.7% (8)	-
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	16.7% (2)	66.7% (8)	-
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	16.7% (2)	-	-	66.7% (8)	16.7% (2)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	8.3% (1)	8.3% (2)	16.7% (2)	58.3% (7)	8.3% (1)

Table 5.4: Views of teachers completing all three questionnaires on the time devoted to particular TA activities (post INSET questionnaire)

As Table 5.5 shows, in the three month follow up questionnaire 50% or more of the 12 respondents who completed all three teacher questionnaires considered the time devoted to four areas of TA activity listed was ‘about right’. In response to the *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN out of class* and *Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN* the spread of responses is notable, suggesting less certainty amongst the group. It

should be recognised however that only eight of the 12 respondents completed this question in the three month follow up questionnaire.

Use of Teaching Assistants	Not Sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	8.3% (1)	-	-	41.7% (5)	16.7% (2)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	-	-	16.7% (2)	50% (6)	-
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	-	-	-	66.7% (8)	-
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	-	-	-	66.7% (8)	-
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	16.7% (2)	-	-	50% (6)	-
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	16.7% (2)	8.3% (1)	-	25% (3)	16.7% (2)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	8.3% (1)	-	8.3% (1)	16.7% (2)	33.3% (4)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	25% (3)	-	-	41.7% (5)	-

Table 5.5 Views of teachers completing all three questionnaires on the time devoted to particular TA activities (three month follow up questionnaire)

Perspectives on the effectiveness of specific activities

In the three month follow up questionnaire the majority of teachers who responded felt TAs were either 'very effective' or 'somewhat effective' when deployed in the eight ways specified (see Table 5.6). This question was completed by 13 of the 19 teachers who returned the third questionnaire.

For four of the areas of TA activity between a fifth and third of respondents considered these to be 'very effective' in the three month follow up questionnaire. Though the small sample size must be recognised, in simple percentage terms this is similar to the responses of the head teachers and SENCOs. There is the same reticence in selecting 'very effective'. Just as with the head teachers and SENCOs it is only in the case of *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* where the percentage of 'very effective' responses exceeds the percentage of 'somewhat effective' responses. This is also the area where the highest percentage of 'very effective' responses are recorded by both the heads and SENCOs and teachers. There is a degree of divergence in relation to *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN* as although similar percentages viewed it as 'very effective', there were four other activities that attracted higher proportions of 'very effective' responses from the head teachers and SENCOs. In the case of the teachers only *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* attracts a higher proportion of 'very effective'

responses from teachers. This perhaps relates to the pragmatic day to day concerns of the teacher.

Activity	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	5.3% (1)	10.5% (2)	21.1% (4)	21.1% (4)	10.5% (2)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	-	5.3% (1)	-	36.8% (7)	26.3% (5)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	-	-	-	31.6% (6)	36.8% (7)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	-	-	-	47.4% (9)	21.1% (4)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	5.3% (1)	5.3% (1)	5.3% (1)	36.8% (7)	15.8% (3)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	5.3% (1)	5.3% (1)	5.3% (1)	42.1% (8)	10.5% (2)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	5.3% (1)	-	5.3% (1)	31.6% (6)	26.3% (5)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	10.5% (2)	5.3% (1)	15.8% (3)	21.1% (4)	15.8% (3)

Table 5.6: Views of all teachers completing the three month follow up questionnaire on the effectiveness of TA use in relation to particular activities

As with the head teacher and SENCO three month follow up questionnaire, it is possible to combine 'somewhat effective' and 'very effective' responses. Viewed in this way, *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN*, *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class* stand out due to around two thirds or more of respondents considering them to be 'somewhat effective' or 'very effective'. Only *Administration (including training/meetings)* and *Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)* attracted combined 'somewhat effective' and 'very effective' responses amounting to less than 50%.

The purpose of this question within the third questionnaire was to allow comparison of responses at the three data collection points. Of the 12 teachers who completed all three questionnaires nine responded to the effectiveness question within the pre INSET questionnaire (see Table 5.7).

Activity	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	16.7% (2)	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	16.7% (2)	16.7% (3)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	1, 8.3% (1)	1, 8.3% (1)	-	1, 8.3% (1)	5, 41.7% (5)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	-	-	50% (6)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	-	8.3% (1)	-	16.7% (2)	41.7% (5)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	-	-	-	16.7% (2)	50% (6)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	-	-	8.3% (1)	15.0% (3)	33.3% (4)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	-	-	8.3% (1)	41.7% (5)	16.7% (2)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	16.7% (2)	-	-	25% (3)	25% (3)

Table 5.7: Views of teachers completing all three questionnaires on the EFFECTIVENESS of TA use in relation to particular activities (pre INSET questionnaire)

The responses mainly fell in in the ‘somewhat effective’ and ‘very effective’ columns but in four of the eight areas somebody viewed a practice as ‘ineffective’ that was seen by others as either ‘somewhat effective’ or very effective’. Though in most cases it was an individual recording a response of ineffective this shows that within this group of teachers there was not consensus. It is not clear, however, whether this lack of consensus was due to individuals making a decision based on how well these forms of TA deployment worked in their own school or basing their judgement on whether some forms of activity were inherently effective or ineffective.

The post INSET questionnaire the effectiveness question was completed by 11 or 12⁷ of the 19 teachers who responded to all three questionnaires (Table 5.8).

With the exception of *Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN* the proportion of respondents recording a response of ‘very effective’ reduced for all areas of TA activity in the post INSET questionnaire. For all areas of TA activity the proportion of ‘somewhat effective’ responses increased. The implication is that a number individuals who had previously felt a practice was ‘very effective’ were caused to question this appraisal as a result of the INSET and recorded a response of ‘somewhat effective’ instead.

⁷ Not every respondent who completed this question gave a response for every area of TA activity listed

There were also small increases (1 – 2 people) in the number of respondents recording ‘not sure’ in relation to six of the eight areas of TA activity.

Activity	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	16.7% (2)	16.7% (2)	8.3% (1)	41.7% (5)	8.3% (1)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	8.3% (1)	16.7% (2)	8.3% (1)	50% (6)	16.7% (2)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	66.7% (8)	8.3% (1)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	-	16.7% (2)	15% (3)	50% (6)	8.3% (1)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	58.3% (7)	16.7% (2)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	16.7% (2)	8.3% (1)	25.0% (3)	41.7% (5)	8.3% (1)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	58.3% (7)	16.7% (2)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	16.7% (2)	-	16.7% (2)	50% (6)	8.3% (1)

Table 5.8: Views of teachers completing all three questionnaires on the EFFECTIVENESS of TA use in relation to particular activities (post INSET questionnaire)

In the three month follow up questionnaire the effectiveness question was completed by 8 - 10⁸ of those who completed all three questionnaires (see Table 5.9).

Supporting/working with individual children with SEN out of class was the only area of activity where more than half (67.7%) of those who could have responded to this question recorded a response of ‘very effective’. The highest proportion of ‘very effective’ responses after this was for *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class* (41.7%). Though the difference between the number of ‘very effective’ responses for these two items may indicate that a distinction is being made between their levels of effectiveness, for most of the areas of TA activity the difference in percentage was often just based on one person.

⁸ Not every respondent who completed this question gave a response for every area of TA activity listed

Activity	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	1, 8.3% (1)	1, 8.3% (1)	3, 25% (3)	1, 8.3% (1)	2, 16.7% (2)
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	-	8.3% (1)	-	33.3% (4)	25% (3)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	-	-	-	25% (3)	41.7% (5)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	-	-	-	50% (6)	16.7% (2)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	8.3% (1)	-	8.3% (1)	25% (3)	66.7% (8)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	8.3% (1)	-	8.3% (1)	33.3% (4)	16.7% (2)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	8.3% (1)	-	8.3% (1)	16.7% (2)	33.3% (4)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	8.3% (1)	-	16.7% (2)	16.7% (2)	25% (3)

Table 5.9: Views of teachers completing all three questionnaires on the effectiveness of TA use in relation to particular activities (three month follow up questionnaire)

It is possible to view this data in terms of the combined 'somewhat effective' and 'very effective' responses. *Administration (including training/meetings)* stands out due to only 25% of respondents considering it to be either 'somewhat effective' or 'very effective', though it should be remembered that this represents three people. Eight more people felt *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN out of class* was 'very effective' or 'somewhat effective' which in percentages terms was 91.7% of those who could have responded to this question. With the caveat regarding low sample size in mind, it may be worthy of note that the four areas of activity where more than 50% of respondents recorded responses of 'somewhat effective' or 'very effective' were *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN*, *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class*, *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class* and *Supporting/working with individual children with SEN out of class*. Three of these four items relate to what is being provided within the individual teacher's classroom and so the responses could again be interpreted as implying a focus on day-to-day pragmatic concerns.

Perspectives on communication between teachers and TAs

Just as in the head teacher and SENCO three month questionnaire, it was the statements *I have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning*

and progress from TAs, I have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms and I receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions) where less than 50% of respondents indicated a level of agreement (see Table 5.10). One explanation may be that all three of these carry a timetabling implication in terms of time being made available for them to take place.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am able to work with/manage TAs effectively	-	-	-	31.6% (6)	36.8% (7)
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom	-	-	-	57.95 (11)	10.5% (2)
I have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs	-	12.1% (4)	5.3%(1)	26.3% (5)	15.8% (3)
I have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms	-	15.8% (3)	21.1% (4)	21.1% (4)	5.3% (1)
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom	-	-	5.3% (1)	52.6% (10)	10.5% (2)
I receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions	-	21.1% (4)	5.3% (1)	31.6% (6)	10.5% (2)
Communication between teachers and TAs is good.	-	10.5% (2)	5.3% (1)	31.6% (6)	21.1% (4)
I have sufficient understanding of effective methods of supporting pupils with SEN	-	5.3% (1)	5.3% (1)	42.1% (8)	15.8% (3)

Table 5.10: Views of all teachers completing the three month follow up questionnaire on communication and current practice

In addition to looking at the set of responses (Table 5.10) from the full group of 19 teachers who completed the three month follow up questionnaire it is also possible to compare responses at all three data collection points for the 12 teachers who completed all three questionnaires. In the pre INSET questionnaire (see Table 5.11) the highest levels of agreement ('agree' or 'strongly agree') were in relation to *TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom* and *TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom*. In all but one aspect of practice, 25% of the respondents recorded an answer of 'not sure'. In relation to *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs* and *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their*

classrooms some respondents recorded a response of ‘strongly disagree’. In both cases 25% of respondents recorded a response of ‘disagree’.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom	-	16.7% (2)	8.3% (1)	41.7% (5)	16.7% (2)
Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils’ learning and progress from TAs	1, 8.3% (1)	3, 25% (3)	3, 25% (3)	3, 25% (3)	-
Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms	16.7% (2)	25% (3)	25% (3)	18.3% (1)	8.3% (1)
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom	-	8.3% (1)	25% (3)	41.7% (5)	8.3% (1)
Teachers receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions	-	25% (3)	25% (3)	16.7% (2)	-

Table 5.11 Views of teachers completing all three questionnaires on communication and practice (pre INSET questionnaire)

In the post INSET questionnaire the teachers were asked to indicate which of these aspects of practice were in need of development (see Table 5.12). Of course the small sample size is a major factor influencing the proportions, but for all aspects at least 75% of respondents agreed (‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’) that practice needed to develop. For *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils’ learning and progress from TAs* and *Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms* the proportion either agreeing or strongly agreeing that practice needed to develop exceeded 90%.

The three month follow up questionnaire re-visited the same aspects of practice within a longer question intended to explore the impact of the project. The repeated questions are shown in italics in Table 5.13.

For each of the five statements repeated from the pre INSET questionnaire there is an increase in the percentage of respondents indicating a level of agreement (‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’). This may indicate greater confidence in practice since engagement with the project, though it should be recognised that the different sample size and slightly different wording in the pre INSET questionnaire that invited a more general appraisal of school practice may be factors influencing the difference. Of the five repeated items, there are three where less than 50% of respondents indicated a level of agreement. These were *I have sufficient opportunity*

to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs, I have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms and I receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions.

We need to develop our practice in relation to:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
How well TAs are informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom	-	8.3% (1)	16.7% (2)	41.7% (5)	33.3% (4)
The opportunities teachers have to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs	-	-	8.3% (1)	50% (6)	41.7% (5)
The opportunities teachers have to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms	-	-	-	58.3% (7)	41.7% (5)
How well TAs are informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom	-	8.3% (1)	16.7% (2)	41.7% (5)	33.3% (4)
The feedback teachers receive from TA led interventions	-	25.0% (3)		33.3% (4)	41.7% (5)

Table 5.12 Views of teachers completing all three questionnaires on communication and practice (post INSET questionnaire).

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am able to work with/manage TAs effectively	-	-	-	33.3% (4)	33.3% (4)
<i>TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom</i>	-	-	-	58.3% (7)	8.3% (1)
<i>I have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs</i>	-	16.7% (2)	8.3% (1)	15% (3)	16.7% (2)
<i>I have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms</i>	-	8.3% (1)	25% (3)	25% (3)	8.3% (1)
<i>TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom</i>	-	-	8.3% (1)	41.7% (5)	16.7% (2)
<i>I receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions</i>	-	16.7% (2)	18.3% (1)	25.0% (3)	16.7% (2)
Communication between teachers and TAs is good.	-	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	16.7% (2)	33.3% (4)
I have sufficient understanding of effective methods of supporting pupils with SEN	-	8.3% (1)	8.3% (1)	33.3% (4)	16.7% (2)

Table 5.13 Views of teachers completing all three questionnaires on communication and practice (Three month follow up questionnaire)

Impact on Practice

Proportionally the teachers were less positive about the overall impact of engagement in the project than those who completed the head teacher and SENCO three month follow up questionnaire (see Table 5.14). The project was considered to have made some impact by 47.4% of those teachers who completed the three month follow up questionnaire. In addition, a couple of respondents (10.5%) acknowledged that the training provided had confirmed practice was already very good in this area. None considered that engagement with the project had made a major impact.

Response	% (N)
A major impact, with clearly identifiable changes in practice across the school	-
Some impact, with some specific areas of practice being strengthened	31.6% (6)
Some impact at the level of thinking about ways of using TAs, but no discernible changes in practice	15.8% (3)
Minimal impact because the training confirmed practice was already very good in this area	10.5% (2)
Minimal or no impact because the training provided did not address the school's needs	-
Minimal or no impact because we have other, more pressing, school improvement priorities currently	5.3% (1)

Table 5.14: Teachers' perceived overall impact of the project after three months.

In their three month follow up questionnaire teachers were also asked to indicate what changes in working practices they had observed. In each area approximately a third to a half of the respondents felt there had been minor or substantial improvements (see Table 5.15).

As Table 5.16 shows, with the exception of *My working relationship with TAs has improved* around a third of teachers who responded to the three month follow up questionnaire indicated that there had been positive developments in relation to their work with TAs. The smaller proportion indicating there had been improvements in this area may be due to relationships already being very good. All of the responses regarding the degree of improvement in Tables 5.15 and 5.16 need to be viewed in the context of the post INSET questionnaire where the majority of respondents felt practice was already either 'somewhat effective' or 'very effective'.

A couple of the teachers who returned the three month follow up questionnaire made specific comments on changes resulting from engagement with the Inspired Educators project. These were:

- *Better planning. TA working with all children in classroom. Teacher working with all children in classroom. More integration of SEN students with peers. Still trialling this method of working but intend to continue next year.*
- *TAs are receiving weekly staff training in line with teachers professional development, which means that TAs feel valued and are responding to the training sessions by developing good practice.*

There is no way of knowing whether the responses captured in Tables 5.15 and 5.16 reflect the experiences of the 598 respondents to the post training questionnaire and those other teachers who accessed Teaching School training but did not respond to it. It is regrettable that more teachers did not feel able to commit the time to completing the three month follow up questionnaire. If this pattern of responses had been replicated across the wider group it would have delivered a powerful message about what could be achieved through training in relation to effective TA deployment.

Activity	Never Been Used	Not Sure	No change	Minor Improvement	Substantial Improvement
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	-	-	15.8% (3)	31.6% (6)	21.1% (4)
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	-	-	31.6% (6)	15.8% (3)	21.1% (4)
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	-	-	21.1% (4)	31.6% (6)	15.8% (3)
Supporting/working with individual children with SEN out of class	10.5% (2)	-	26.3% (5)	26.3% (5)	5.3% (1)
Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN out of class	5.3% (1)	-	31.6% (6)	26.3% (5)	5.3% (1)
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	-	10.5% (2)	26.3% (5)	26.3% (5)	5.3% (1)
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	10.5% (2)	-	36.8% (7)	15.8% (3)	5.3% (1)

Table 5.15: Areas of TA activity that teachers indicated had improved since engagement with the Inspired Educators project .

Developments	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am clearer about what represents good practice in TA deployment	-	5.3% (1)	15.8% (3)	21.1% (4)	15.8% (3)
I am aware of a broader range of effective methods of TA deployment	-	5.3% (1)	10.5% (2)	26.5% (5)	15.8% (3)
I am more confident that the ways I utilise TAs within my lessons represent good practice	-	5.3% (1)	10.5% (2)	21.1% (4)	21.1% (4)
I am able to work with/manage TAs more effectively	-	5.3% (1)	15.8% (3)	15.8% (3)	21.1% (4)
I am better at briefing TAs on the support they need to provide within my lessons	-	10.5% (2)	15.8% (3)	15.8% (3)	15.8% (3)
The quality and/or quantity of feedback TAs provide for me has improved	-	10.5% (2)	10.5% (2)	31.6% (6)	5.3% (1)
Within my lesson plans I am better at planning for the use of TAs	-	10.5% (2)	15.8% (3)	21.1% (4)	10.5% (2)
I am more confident that TAs understand their role within the lesson	-	10.5% (2)	10.5% (2)	21.1% (4)	15.8% (3)
I am better able to show the impact of TAs on the quality of teaching and learning	-	10.5% (2)	15.8% (3)	21.1% (4)	10.5% (2)
My working relationship with TAs has improved	-	5.3% (1)	36.8% (7)	10.5% (2)	5.3% (1)
The TAs I work with have grown in confidence	-	5.3% (1)	21.1% (4)	21.1% (4)	10.5% (2)
I am more confident that our use of TAs represents value for money	-	5.3% (1)	21.1% (4)	21.1% (4)	10.5% (2)

Table 5.16: Perceived degree of change in practice since engagement with the Inspired Educators project

Lessons learned

In the three month follow up questionnaire teachers were asked to reflect on their own school's engagement with the Inspired Educators project and lessons learned from it, to share with other schools interested in engaging with it in the future.

In relation to how to get the most benefit from the project, respondents were asked to offer three pieces of advice. The five responses recorded were:

- *I would recommend other schools to attend the training and feedback implications to other staff.*
- *Look for practical advice for teachers.*
- *More peer interaction for SEN students. Less time spent attached to TA.*
- *Think carefully about what you want from this project.*
- *Talk to teaching assistants first.*

The teachers were also asked what advice they would give to another school on how to improve practice and use of TAs, when working with children with SEN. Although responses varied, a number related to communication:

- *Ask the TAs for their views.*
- *Clear communication and planning with teachers.*
- *Clear focus and tracking through interventions.*
- *Communication.*
- *Flexibility of use/feedback.*
- *Having time to discuss teaching and learning with TAs.*
- *Know the pupils' needs and deploy TAs accordingly.*
- *Planning.*
- *Time for effective communication.*
- *Try to work as a team with TA as a starting point for change. Both to be class teachers and work amongst the group fairly equally rather than each with separate roles.*

Teachers were asked to comment on the most and least helpful aspects of the Inspired Educators project. The small sample size meant that this attracted very few responses. These are shown in Table 5.17.

Most helpful	Least Helpful
Data which shows TAs may not have been effective as they were previously working. This is a good reason to make changes	Difficulties in managing this change. Needs guidelines from senior management and SENCO to make whole school changes
Opportunity to reflect on the deployment of TAs within our school and to question some historical use of TAs and how they are deployed	Still not being sure how to get teachers fully on board
Thinking of more creative ways to use TA effectively	
Understanding of TA use, practical ideas and food for thought	
Work on questioning	

Table 5.17: *Aspects of the project teachers found least and most useful in their practice*

Exposure to the research as a driver for change is highlighted by one respondent and raises the question of when, apart from events such as the training led by the Teaching Schools, teachers have the opportunity to directly access research and relate this to practice. A related issue is the opportunity to reflect highlighted by another respondent. Reflecting on practice with the support of an evidence base from research is a potentially powerful combination in stimulating change.

There were only two answers to the question asking respondents to identify the aspects of the project they found least useful. A common feature of these is that they relate to managing change in schools rather than directly to anything provided through the Inspired Educators project. However they might suggest, in these two cases at least, that ongoing support via the project may have been helpful.

In the three month follow up questionnaire for teachers 42.1% of respondents indicated that they would recommend the Mencap Inspired Educators project to a colleague or another school and 10.2% said they would not. This was not as positive as the responses of the head teachers and SENCOs where 68.1% indicated that they would recommend the Mencap Inspired Educators project to a colleague or another school.

Summary Discussion

The response rate for the three month follow up questionnaire for teachers was very low so relatively large percentage differences in particular views are attributable to one or two people. Any discussion of patterns or comparison across data sets within this chapter has necessarily been tentative. The intended comparison of responses across the three data collection points was only possible for those who had completed all three questionnaires and there can be no assumption that their views are representative of the much larger group of teachers who completed the pre and post INSET questionnaires. The group of 12 who completed all three questionnaires represented a subset of the 19 who completed the third questionnaire. The main value of this data is in illustrating the experience of a few teachers who had been exposed to the project. Within these limitations there are some points that can be made regarding the impact of the project.

The questionnaires had been designed around a core set of repeated questions related to the time devoted to specific activities and perceptions of effectiveness. The premise in relation to time spent on specific activities was that the INSET might cause respondent to question the current balance between these, leading to a reduction of 'about right' responses. It was anticipated that this would increase again by the three month follow up questionnaire, based on changes as a result of engagement with the project. A similar pattern was anticipated in relation to effectiveness. In the case of the time devoted to specific activities the responses did not conform to the anticipated pattern. Amongst the 12 respondents who completed all three questionnaires the proportion of respondents indicating the time spent on specific activities in the three month follow up was 'about right' had decreased compared to the post INSET questionnaire. It is also worthy of note that this was a different pattern to the head teachers and SENCOs where there was an increase in the three month follow up questionnaire in those recording a response of 'about right' compared to the post seminar questionnaire. Responses to the question on effectiveness across the three questionnaires adhered more closely to the anticipated pattern. There was a reduced proportion of 'very effective' responses in relation to specific modes of deployment in the post INSET questionnaire, followed by an increase in the three month follow up questionnaire. This could indicate some questioning of practice resulting from the INSET and positive changes subsequently.

With so few respondents the number of additional comments gathered through the three month follow up questionnaire was minimal. Some individual respondents commented on the value of exposure to the research on effective use of TAs and the

opportunity to reflect on practice. There were a number of recommendations to other schools of possible ways to develop practice related to better communication.

Around a third of those who responded to the three month follow up questionnaire indicated that there had been positive developments in relation to how they worked with TAs. The one aspect where there was less strength of agreement was in response to the statement *My working relationship with TAs has improved*. A possible explanation is that respondents already felt their relationships with TAs was good before engaging with the Inspired Educators project.

Around half of those who responded to the three month follow up questionnaire felt that within their schools there had been either minor or substantial improvement in relation to *In class general support with a focus on those with SEN* and *Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class*. For all other areas of TA activity between 20% and 37% felt there had been some degree of improvement. These responses regarding the degree of improvement need to be viewed in the context of the post INSET questionnaire where the majority of respondents felt practice was already either 'somewhat effective' or 'very effective'.

Compared to those who had completed the head teacher and SENCO three month follow up questionnaire, the teachers were a little less positive about the impact of engagement with the project. None of those responding to the teacher three month follow up questionnaire indicated that engagement with the project had *a major impact, with clearly identifiable changes in practice across the school*. Just below a third (31.6%) considered that there had been *some impact, with some specific areas of practice being strengthened*. As with any other comparison with the responses of head teacher and SENCOs it is important to recognise that different schools were represented and there were differences in sample size.

The teachers' three month follow up questionnaire represented a missed opportunity for teachers to make their voice heard with regard to the issue of TA deployment and the extent to which access to training and subsequent action planning in schools can address some of the nationally expressed criticisms of practice. Clearly there is a variety of reasons why individuals do not complete questionnaires and, as already documented, this questionnaire suffered from problems in getting it directly to the intended recipients. The design of the questionnaires may also have been a factor. They were long and required the individual to dedicate period of time to their completion. However an important message for the teaching profession arising from this evaluation may be that it is difficult for educational researchers to construct an evidence informed argument regarding the need for quality training based on impact without the engagement of key stakeholders.

Chapter 6: Case Study Visits

Key Points

- For some schools the Inspired Educators project had reinforced the changes they had already started to make in their use of TA support. The value of this form of impact should not be underestimated.
- There was evidence from some of the case study visits that senior leaders had disseminated information to their staff but in others there was a lack of awareness of the school's involvement.
- Knowledge of research regarding TA use gave some senior leaders confidence that changes they were making were right and also an evidence base to draw on when convincing school staff of the need for change.
- Opportunities for communication between TAs and teachers remained an area of concern for some schools.
- There was evidence that engagement with the Inspired Educators project had supported schools in changing perceptions of the TA role and, where necessary, changing how TAs were deployed.
- There were range of examples from the case study interviews illustrating attitudinal, cultural and behavioural change.
- Some schools noted that the emphasis on TA effectiveness had led to higher expectations of candidates when recruiting new TAs.

Introduction

Eleven schools were used as case studies, eight primary (including one junior) and three secondary, from a range of local authority areas across the country. The primary schools ranged in size from small village or one form entry schools to large primaries with over 400 pupils. Three were academies. The secondary schools ranged from one that was smaller than average, with 850 pupils, to a large community college with 2,100 students. The schools varied in the ethnic background of their pupils, the number of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (receiving pupil premium and/or free school meals) and the number of pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs. Apart from communication, which was a particular problem in some of the larger schools, there were no issues from the case studies which stand out in relation to type of school or school population. The case study visits were timed to allow maximum time to have elapsed since the head teacher and SENCO seminars. However this did not necessarily guarantee in all cases that much time had elapsed since the school's last contact with the project through the teacher INSET provided by the Teaching Schools. In the case of one school, for example, the visit took place only two months after the teachers' last contact with the Teaching School providing training, even though the senior staff would have attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars considerably earlier than this.

The case studies illustrated the obvious but important point that the Inspired Educators project was not tackling an area of professional practice that schools had not previously considered. As the brief summary at the start of this evaluation report illustrated, concerns have been raised about the ways in which TAs are deployed to work with pupils with special educational needs and disabilities over many years. To varying degrees schools are likely to have at least reflected on their practice in this area even if not enacting changes. It is against this background that the impact on practice and behaviour needs to be considered. A summary of each case study visit is included in Appendices 25 – 35.

The validating role of the Inspired Educators project

All of the case study schools were able to talk about changes in behaviour and/or practice, but it was sometimes difficult to be clear about the specific impact of the project on these schools. The main reason for this was because almost all of the case study schools were, or at least said they were, working on changing their practice in relation to the use of TAs before being involved in the Inspired Educators project. It is presumed that this desire for change was one of their reasons for becoming involved in the project. What is clear, in a number of cases, is that the Inspired Educators training reinforced a message that schools had already heard, and gave them the confidence to make or continue with change related to TA use.

It is likely that schools were already aware of general issues highlighted by the various publications from the DISS project (eg Blatchford et al 2009). In one school the SENCO recalled that there was publicity based on interpretations of research that suggested TAs were ineffective, which shocked some schools into planning to 'get rid of all TAs', but she had quickly re-interpreted the research to her team as it clearly emphasised that it is the nature of deployment that matters. In another school, before attendance at the training, a briefing had already been provided for teaching staff on the research that implied TAs were having minimal impact and were not being used cost effectively. In this school a new deputy head for inclusion had been appointed, who was reportedly the driving force behind the changes to the TAs' roles and attendance at the project training. The information provided in the seminar was used by senior management to reinforce the strategy they had already adopted.

In attending the Inspired Educators seminar, one head teacher had seen that they were 'on the right lines', as it reinforced her 'own beliefs and vision about where they should be going'. The feedback the teachers had received from the seminar was felt by them to 'back up' the changes that were already being made in the school, and had 'given them permission to change things'. The head suggested it had given teachers the confidence to accept that she was right! The head and teachers interviewed felt that engagement with the project had increased their confidence in implementing the changes already happening, as 'cleverer people than them' had appeared to endorse them, and they had learnt about what other practitioners were doing along the same lines.

In another school the 'hard evidence about TAs' provided by the seminar had served to reinforce its developing practice, and had underlined how inappropriate some

interventions in classrooms may have been. In another school, overall the project was supporting what they had already thought to be the case with regard to TA deployment, and had 'given weight' to the SENCO's and other members of SLT's arguments about how TAs should be used. The SENCO had found it useful to be able to quote the research presented at the seminar and it had changed their thinking with regard to the need for TA training and development. Another school said the project had helped to confirm what the school was already doing – this gave increased confidence and opened up a dialogue about the use of interventions.

A trigger for whole school change

One head teacher said that the head teacher and SENCO seminar had informed his thinking and caused him to think much more carefully about TAs and how to deploy this resource. Although he was already familiar with some of the research, it had been useful to hear it in its entirety and to discuss it with others. He had been reassured that this 'had not moved on significantly' and an important message from the seminar was 'this is not the fault of TAs'. He reported that the core provision at the school was working for all pupils but structures which made it possible for teachers to deal with challenges needed to be re-evaluated. Difficulties, it was suggested, occurred as a result of seeing TA activity as 'putting on something extra or different' for a pupil rather than classroom teachers planning how they could differentiate the lesson to ensure it was accessible and relevant for all pupils. In looking at how staff were deployed, and the relationship between teaching and support staff, the school had re-set the focus on quality in-class teaching. In another school, where some children were making little or no progress, a questionnaire was conducted that identified that in extreme cases some pupils may only have been spending two afternoons a week in lessons.

One school provided an example of how the closer scrutiny of the deployment of TAs can affect the whole school. The SENCO reported that provision for pupils with SEN had been recognised as 'second to none' by Ofsted in 2011, and was also commented upon favourably in the most recent inspection in March of that year. She had been in post for 20 years, and the SEN department had been viewed as successful. However, whilst acknowledging that the SEN provision had been seen as outstanding at the school, and had continued to be strong with statemented pupils, the head said that gaps had opened up with pupils at School Action and School Action Plus and progress of the most able pupils had become an issue. The model of TA deployment had primarily been sitting alongside pupils in the classroom, but whilst some of the individual work had been picked out for praise by Ofsted and the relationship with a particular adult might be crucial for some pupils, it was not having the 'collective impact' which was required.

Some specific actions and priorities related to whole school practice highlighted by the schools visited included:

- TAs staying in the classroom more and working with any group of pupils, not just those with SEN or of lower ability.
- Setting a priority for the upskilling and development of TAs.

- Developing a specific policy for TAs around the areas outlined at the seminar – deployment, preparedness and professional development – and identifying those needing additional support or training.
- An audit of TA skills and experience alongside case studies of individual children to identify their needs.
- The effective deployment and management of TAs becoming part of lesson plans, with a need to demonstrate the cost effectiveness and value for money of TAs, justifying their continued employment.
- The SENCO becoming a non-teaching post (although in one school the SENCO was changing from non-teaching to teaching three days a week, which was causing teachers concern).
- The redesignation of TAs as learning support assistants (LSAs) following engagement with the project. One school had a division between LSAs for SEN or inclusion which was thought to have led to better training and deployment, with each LSA developing an area of specialism. The LSAs now worked across a year group which helped to bridge the gap in pupil learning.
- TAs now spending mornings in the classrooms with interventions and booster activities taking place in the afternoons. In one school these activities were timetabled by the SENCO, which was helpful for the TAs but caused some difficulties for teachers.
- TAs with particular specialisms now leading in-house CPD and school clubs.

Changes in modes of TA deployment

In all of the case study schools TAs, post project, were being deployed in a different way. Several of the case study schools reported that before the training, TAs would work with the lower ability pupils or the pupils with higher levels of special educational need, leaving the teacher to work with the more able children. TAs would often work with one particular child, which could lead to the child's independence diminishing and increased reliance on adult support. In some cases the support would be focused on the completion of worksheets or similar activities rather than supporting the pupils in their learning. Some of those interviewed expressed their concern that the practice of TAs taking children out of class meant that they then missed input from the teacher, and opportunities to socialise with peers.

One head said that the change involved the TA moving away from 'being the 31st child in the classroom' and instead becoming more proactive and developing their expertise. In almost all cases this was very much welcomed but there were one or two concerns about increased workload and one head teacher said there had been some resistance from older and 'more traditional' TAs. There were clearly issues around finance, with several schools mentioning the need to ensure that the employment of TAs was justified and providing value for money.

There was a view that perceptions needed to change - some TAs felt they were employed just to work with a particular group of pupils and some teachers and TAs saw TAs as 'glued' to a particular child. One school reported that they had used an Ofsted DVD that had contrasted the 'traditional' model of a TA sitting with a child with a TA working in a classroom where it was difficult to see who was the teacher and who was the TA. The school also reported how they were working to 'empower' TAs to tell teachers that they would not do photocopying and similar administrative tasks for them. The latter point is a sensitive issue for individual schools to tackle. In prioritising TAs for what might be considered front line duties it should also be remembered that the current Teachers Pay and Conditions document states,

'A teacher should not be required routinely to participate in any administrative, clerical and organisational tasks which do not call for the exercise of a teacher's professional skills and judgment' (DfE 2014b: 50).

In one school it was felt that TAs had benefited in terms of subject and pedagogical knowledge by being in the classroom more in the mornings (as well as some afternoons, dependent on needs). Training was seen to be key, although TAs' different strengths could also be used to deploy them effectively in the afternoons with particular pupils. From the TA perspective, they were now running more interventions, as well as one-to-one and group support, within classrooms – rather than always taking pupils out of class. They were also working with Gifted and Talented pupils. Over the past couple of years, they had been required to have better subject knowledge to be able to deliver lessons to individuals as well as whole classes. Training for TAs (for example, in extra literacy, numeracy, behaviour, autism spectrum disorders, safeguarding, first aid) was said to now be of better quality and more focused on particular pupils' specific needs. The SENCO kept them informed of new developments, and they attended KS1 and KS2 meetings.

Changes in priorities for the recruitment of TAs

Changing the role of TAs had led to additional consideration for some schools when recruiting TAs. One school reported how, when they are recruiting TAs now, part of the selection criteria is to ask the candidate how they would move the school forward. In the past the school reported they would have 'made do' but now they have actively decided not to employ some TAs from the first round of interviews – this was seen as a clear change of practice and a positive step forward. Others said that with raised expectations it was harder to find good quality applicants with the right qualifications and experience. The view was expressed by a number of schools that there should be a standard TA training package and qualification.

The importance of engaging all staff through a shared understanding

An interesting finding, having in mind that issues around communication and involving TAs have previously been highlighted as a cause for concern, was that at some schools the teachers and/or TAs were unaware that the school was even engaged in the project. There were examples where the head teacher and teachers spoke highly of the project, acknowledging that it had reinforced the ideas and

developments which were already happening in the school, but the TAs were not aware of its existence, or that the school was taking part in it. It would seem likely that to achieve the maximum benefits all staff need to be aware of the type of changes taking place, the rationale behind these and the intended impact. There were schools visited where it was clear the senior leadership team had thought very carefully about this issue of stakeholder engagement and organised methods of dissemination. Schools gave examples of deciding to share the school improvement plan with all staff, so there was a shared understanding of the school's direction and their part in it.

In one particular school the difficulties that can be caused when different agendas coincide were evident. The school had gone through a period of intense change over the previous year as a result of financial issues combined with declining results over the past three years. Expenditure on support provision had been found to be the most significant aspect, and the heavy reliance on interventions, especially at KS4, had not been sustainable. This had precipitated a redundancy/redeployment process, affecting the body of TAs. The SENCO had also decided to leave at the end of the year. Within the interviews with the TAs in particular, there was a degree of suspicion that the focus on issues of TA deployment, both within the interview and generally in school, was associated with the financial issues affecting the school and possible reductions in staffing rather than an attempt to maximise the impact of teaching assistants.

At one school there was recognition by teachers that they and the TAs had different experience and expertise and now, based on this awareness, the teachers and LSAs worked more effectively in a team, each bringing their different knowledge and skills. As the deputy head put it 'some people are Tiggers, some are Owls, some are Eeyores – you don't put two Tiggers together' – in other words there needed to be a balance of styles and relationships to keep the classroom climate even and positive.

Attitudinal, cultural and behavioural change

One school reported a change from a view that 'this child is not suitable for this school' to 'how can we suit them here'. This is an example of a change at the level of values and principles and can be seen as representing a shift towards a more inclusive approach to provision. At another school interviewees identified a change in belief about how TAs should be deployed, commenting that engagement with the Inspired Educators project had highlighted a clear need for a change of mindset. There was now more flexibility as TAs moved around to work with different groups of children according to need, rather than simply having the same TA in the classroom every day.

Some schools were working to overcome a pre-existing view that the more adults in the classroom the better because it gave more support. Illustrating changes in this perspective, another school reported that TAs were now not seen as a 'spare pair of hands' and noted the idea that the 'child is the problem' has been reviewed. One school had redesignated TAs as LSA to emphasise the role in supporting learning but reported that it was still a challenge to change the attitudes and working practices of some teaching staff.

Teachers at another school described how perceptions of how to deploy TAs had changed. The expectation was now that instead of just sitting with pupils they had an active role engaging with the lesson, moving around groups, supporting differentiation. Direction provided by teacher was key, with time built in for collaborative planning (not in TAs' own time). Pupils were now spending more time in the classroom and with teachers. As a result they were not so reliant on a TA and were becoming more independent learners.

There were several comments suggesting that teachers did not see the responsibility for children with SEN as theirs and that this attitude was difficult to change. In one school the deputy head said that some teachers still felt that certain children were too difficult to teach and so should be handed over to a TA. Another deputy head noted,

'Teachers are taking more of a responsibility for every child in their class, rather than thinking that is someone else's job'.

At one school the head had dispensed with the idea of an SEN group because he said teachers seemed to forget that these children were their responsibility and part of their class. The new focus was on temporary interventions until pupils had improved. This was said to be evident in classroom practice. The SENCO noted,

'... one TA, when I was doing performance management last week, said I've really noticed the difference in class, because my teacher now goes and works with the bottom set and gets me to sit with the middle or top set'.

A SENCO reported that since the head teacher and SENCO seminar they had aimed to increasingly involve teachers in teaching pupils with SEN. Teachers now realised that these pupils were their responsibility, not the TA's. All teachers now had to provide provision maps for all pupils, something which came directly from the seminar. TAs at the school said that their way of working with teachers had been changed – they were staying with them in the classroom more and were now expected to be able to work with any group whereas before they had only worked with lower ability pupils.

At one school it was felt that teachers were now more reflective and thought more about their own roles and those of TAs. Although the TAs said they could talk to teachers they still felt there was a hierarchy between teachers and support staff, and despite changes there was still a need for more cohesiveness and for making use of people's strengths and specialisms. Teachers at the school felt it would have been beneficial if they had been directly involved in the training as this would have helped them to understand 'the bigger picture'.

At a small primary school the TAs reportedly now shadowed teachers, to learn more about their goals and strategies for individual pupils as well as their teaching techniques. TAs had been given time to develop materials, reflect on their own learning and communicate with teachers, although teachers had not similarly been given time to communicate with TAs and saw this as a barrier to improving practice.

Despite this concern, the teachers felt there was generally a very positive working relationship and indicated that they had changed their classroom practice, noting,

'I have made it more of a priority in my own teaching practice this year definitely, how I use TAs for the benefit of the children'.

'... I have <name of TA> in now with a child, rather than taking him out, so I know he is always on my mind when planning, whereas it used to be well I don't think he is going to be in the lesson. Now I know he's going to be there so I know I am going to need really specific key questions or targets that he needs'.

An unexpected outcome for one school was to look at the quality of the teaching, particularly in areas of the curriculum where there were issues in relation to pupils with SEN. One SENCO noted,

'The other thing that has come out of this ... for maths in particular is the quality of teaching. That isn't a criticism, it is just looking at the confidence of the delivery of the lesson. I think what we have found is very important is to think what we are actually looking at. Who is confident teaching and who is best able to teach the less able and it can't be the LSA who hasn't got the qualification'.

There were some examples of developments in how TAs worked and communicated with pupils. One of the key findings from the DISS project was that while teachers 'open up' talk, TAs close it down. One school reported that the work undertaken by the school before and after the seminar had improved the quality of questioning (staff of pupils) and encouraged learning conversations. For another school the training had emphasised that TAs should ask questions of pupils and avoid over-helping and doing the child's work for them because they wanted to please the teacher. It was felt that the project had been perfectly timed to facilitate that conversation with teachers and TAs. Issues had come to light when SATs results in maths were reviewed and it became clear that TAs were over-supporting the SEN group but they were not making progress.

Some interviewees spoke positively about how teachers had been encouraged through the school's engagement with the Inspired Educators project to be more reflective and think about how they deploy TAs in the classroom. TAs had more ownership over children's progress and felt more appreciated. One SENCO noticed that TAs had a better attitude, were happier and less stressed.

Improving Communication

For some schools communication was seen as a barrier to working effectively - perhaps not surprisingly communication was a particular issue in the larger schools. In a small number of schools there was a perception by teachers and TAs of a 'them and us' attitude, causing a communication barrier. Another example given of a barrier to communication was TAs not being involved in pupil progress meetings. One SENCO commented,

'I think the biggest weakness that came out of all of it, was the amount of communication between the teacher and the TA - the lack of planning'.

Noting that dialogue with the TAs had always been good, one school reported this was based more on working together, with TAs being asked about tackling anything new beforehand – which they were said to appreciate. Whilst the TAs did not perceive there to have been a change in the level of guidance and support offered to them – this had always been forthcoming, and the teachers had always discussed with them what was expected of them – they said that they were providing input to the teachers more, and communication between them had improved.

In some of the case study visits the issue of sufficient opportunities for teachers to liaise or plan with TAs was highlighted. This reflects an area of concern raised within the questionnaire responses. When raising concerns about this issue, interviewees typically made the point that the opportunities were limited, and usually in the TAs' own time. This is well known to be common practice, and has previously featured in several research studies.

In one school direction for the TAs was provided primarily by the SENCO, as there were no opportunities for forward planning with the teachers, but the TAs said that some teachers were now open to suggestions from them and had accepted that they had knowledge about pupils and issues relating to SEN. The teachers also reported that TAs had become more confident in talking to them about pupils and in suggesting strategies, describing them as 'knowledgeable' about certain pupils; they were prepared to say if homework was too demanding for a particular individual, for example. Some of the TAs had received training in relation to Autism Spectrum Disorders the previous year, and continued to work with these pupils outside the classroom.

Evidence of improved outcomes

Within the case study interviews the participants were asked to indicate any evidence of improved outcomes since engagement with the Inspired Educators project. One school reported that pupils with SEN were closing the gap with their peers in maths, with pupils making 3-4 points of progress each year, and KS2 results being the best ever. Pupils had benefited socially and emotionally, becoming more confident with growing self-esteem. Pupils with SEN were said to have more of a voice and be better behaved. Another SENCO thought that as a result of the project the school had become more inclusive, observing, 'pupils who have the most need, need teachers'.

In another school the appointment of a home-school worker had reportedly led to improved behaviour and attendance and parents feeling more supported. The school also reported that year on year value added scores had improved and progress for pupils with SEN was outstanding.

Some schools made the point that by deploying TAs differently the pupils now did not develop an expectation that they would work with an adult and so were more

independent and comfortable approaching TAs as well as teachers to support their learning.

One school described how running interventions in the afternoon improved pupils' social development as well as giving them more time in the classroom. Having more interventions at lunch time or after school was considered beneficial as it meant pupils were not taken out of lessons such as art, science or PE which they really enjoyed or where they really excelled. The children had reportedly become more independent learners and were more socially skilled and confident.

Practical approaches implemented to improve practice

In addition to supporting the evaluation of the Inspired Educators project, the case study interviews sought to identify practical approaches used by the case study schools to bring about improvements in practice. A number of examples were provided:

- TAs are provided with textbooks to take home so they can think about lessons in advance.
- A format for lesson plans with space to record the TA's focus and their intended contribution.
- Planning includes details of what the TA will focus on and what they are expected to do, e.g. defining the kinds of questions to use and what vocabulary to focus on.
- Written feedback from TAs so there are records to document progress and teachers are clear that they are scaffolding learning.
- A proforma for lesson observations which includes identifying the use of other adults.
- Reducing the number of interventions released TAs for formal training, e.g. as an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant and provided time for them to be released for this work, which had been hugely beneficial.
- It was already part of the school plan to improve staff use of questioning when working with children. The template supplied during the training and the accompanying book were used to structure how support staff use questioning.
- Where a TA was not sure what questions to use with books in the 'reading box' the teacher produced laminated cards with examples so the TA could see what was required and devise their own list of questions.
- Working with groups within lessons (G&T, as well as SEN) or one-to-one, depending on the lesson and the needs – also sometimes still working with groups in another room.
- Delivering to the whole class whilst the teacher supports.
- Pre-teaching for pupils with SEN. Working with pupils before the lesson (on concepts, words, etc) to help them be more active and engage with the main lesson.
- Setting up individual work stations and timetables for pupils with SEN. This is tracked by the TA throughout the day, to make sure it happens.
- Having a different role for the TA, making verbal response notes, listening to pupils and making assessment notes to support next steps, TAs moving around the class.

- Input to groups from TA, and feedback to teacher (eg misconceptions) to plan for the next lesson.
- Cooking/healthy eating session for children and parents led by a TA, also breakfast and homework clubs.

Barriers to change

In addition to identifying the positive changes resulting from engagement with the Inspired Educators project it is important to recognise barriers to change. The case study schools reported a number of issues which can make change difficult:

- Finance and value for money need to be taken into account.
- There can be an issue for parents if their child is no longer receiving one to one support.
- There is a lack of understanding from the government about children's needs – children often come from a background where there is a lack of positive attitudes towards education.
- Teachers felt they lacked knowledge about medical care for children with complex needs.
- Policies and staff are constantly changing, things become blurred, it is important to have regular training and discussion.
- As a school becomes better at dealing with SEN it tends to attract more children with SEN, which presents challenges as well as opportunities.
- Reflecting some of one school's difficulties in maintaining a universal and consistent approach it was suggested that budgets needed to be available to train supply and agency staff so that they were aware of what was expected of them when working in the school.
- Despite the improvements made it was felt there was still a need for more cohesiveness. It was also felt that the approach to provision still did not make use of people's specialisms and strengths as much as it could.
- Communication could be a barrier with a feeling that LSA/TAs were not always brought into the loop. For example, support staff were not part of the pupil progress meetings at the moment but would like to be.
- Clear leadership and vision are essential.
- The bureaucracy involved in responding to pupils' needs can impact on other pupils – the response needs to be quicker.
- Mobility - children come and go frequently and so do staff, eg there may be agency staff to help with language but when the child leaves so do they, making it hard to maintain a consistent approach.
- TAs felt that more discussion of learning spaces and places to work would be helpful, as would time for preparation and discussion with teachers.
- In addition to an increased budget and the provision of more staff as enablers of change, teachers as well as TAs would benefit from training for certain conditions (such as ASD).
- TAs suggested that they would gain from further training, for their own professional development, and for the sake of the pupils.

A number of these are school specific, related to their particular context and the changes they planned to make. Others are more generic and may be of use in guiding schools when engaging in this project in the future.

Feedback on the Inspired Educators project

The Inspired Educators project was based on the model of engaging members of senior leadership initially who would drive forward whole school developments at the strategic level and access to training for teachers to support improvements in classroom practice. For the project to achieve its intended impact it therefore relied not just on the quality of the head teacher and SENCO seminars and the training led by the Teaching Schools but the actions taken by individual schools in response to them. Some of the feedback gathered during the case study visits was in the form of positive comments about the project:

- The information supplied was clear and concrete with clear messages to take back to staff.
- There was a very important opportunity to visit other schools to gain insight into how others are dealing with issues.
- It helped teachers consider how they manage support staff and recognise that they need to model good practice for support staff.

A lot of feedback was developmental in nature, incorporating constructive comments on how the project could be strengthened. A number of these comments related to school based factors rather than either the seminars or the INSET provided by the project:

- The materials in the MITA book were valued but it would be very helpful to have downloadable resources (such as the audit sheet) either in the training or connected to the book, so that they could be adapted and customised for a school's particular needs.
- One head commented that many schools have not heard of the project so more publicity is needed.
- The seminar should have been a whole day, with time set aside to discuss and develop the action plan. More time was needed to consider the implications and develop practical actions.
- A whole day for the seminar would have allowed time to be set aside to discuss and develop the action plan.
- Practical ideas in videos or vignettes would have reinforced the ideas from the seminar.
- Train teachers and TAs together to model classroom practice.
- Teachers felt it would have been beneficial if they had direct access to the training rather than just the SENCO and the deputy head as this would have enabled them to understand the 'big picture'.
- More training could be made available. A need was identified for time to be set aside to train TAs, allowing them to shadow teachers and for practice to be modelled. It was important that this should be well planned and have a clear purpose rather than on an ad hoc basis with TAs simply dropping into classes when opportunities presented.

- The information was a little general and dated (ie the research was four years old) and ideally it should also have been led by school based practitioners.
- Teachers felt they needed training in terms of practical resources, for example what to do in relation to dyslexia or autism, not just what they are in theory. Again they talked of the need for time; time to learn and time to visit special schools, perhaps through more collaboration between different types of schools
- Whilst appreciating the opportunities for discussion during the training, it could be improved with less 'delivery by Powerpoint'. There should be more group discussion and the use of scenarios (fictional but authentic) about teachers, TAs, children, families and classroom situations, which could provide the focus of conversations to start to apply the learning hypothetically in a 'safe space' and to demonstrate what works well.
- The evidence from this evaluation should be collated and circulated to schools, trainers and Teaching Schools. It is important to see the impact of the project and also to note where improvements could be made.
- One SENCO commented that, as teachers and TAs needed to 'buy into the idea of having to change', it would have been good to have had 'something which could ignite a change': for her, this had been the 'shock' of the evidence presented at the seminar which had 'made it stick'. It would also have been useful to have heard viewpoints from other schools, with examples of how they deployed TAs and what other SENCOs were doing.

Summary Discussion

The case studies illustrated the obvious but important point that the Inspired Educators project was not tackling an area of professional practice that schools had not previously considered. To varying degrees schools are likely to have at least reflected on their practice in this area even if not enacting changes. It is against this background that the impact on practice and behaviour needs to be considered. For some schools the Inspired Educators project had reinforced the changes they had already started to make in their use of TA support. This validating role should not be underestimated as a form of impact. A number of the senior leaders interviewed commented on the value of the head teacher and SENCO seminars in reassuring them that they were leading developments that were underpinned by an evidence base and moving in the right direction. Some of those interviewed also indicated that awareness of the research presented in the head teacher and SENCO seminars provided a degree of leverage in school when taking forward changes that might challenge existing views on the purpose of TAs and effective modes of deployment.

Echoing a view emerging from the questionnaires, opportunities for communication between TAs and teachers remained an area of concern for some schools. The issue tended to relate to insufficient opportunities and those that did exist often relying on the goodwill of the TA in staying after their allocated hours. Timetabling means that in a secondary school the TA may be moving to a different lesson at the end of the period and this inevitably makes liaison difficult. The problem may not be so great in a primary school but there is still the issue that opportunities to liaise may be restricted to lunchtimes, break times and before and after school. Some schools

referred to various proformas that might allow a degree of communication in paper form.

There was evidence that engagement with the Inspired Educators project had supported schools in changing perceptions of the TA role and, where necessary, changing how TAs were deployed. The main change related to a stronger focus on outcomes of support rather than assuming the presence of additional support was inherently beneficial. A number of senior leaders expressed in different ways the form the latter assumption sometimes took. They talked, for example, of changing the view of the TA as 'the 31st child in the classroom' or as a 'spare pair of hands'. There was also reference to the model of TAs 'glued' to a particular child. These types of comment illustrated that for senior leaders trying to bring about the change it was not just a case of implementing a different set of processes. There was a need to encourage staff to reconsider some fundamental views on the role of the TA. In some schools it seemed that senior leaders were attempting to lead change without informing staff of the school's participation in the Inspired Educators project. At best this seemed to lead to school staff recognising that changes were taking place but not being entirely clear as to impetus behind this. At worst there was an example of a school where some of those interviewed associated the changes with budget cuts and the possible need for redundancy. If this is the perceived purpose it is less likely staff will be enthusiastic participants in the process of change.

If TAs are viewed as more than 'the 31st child in the classroom' or as a 'spare pair of hands' and there is a stronger focus on outcomes then it is inevitable this leads to higher expectations related to the TA role. This point seemed to be reflected in the comment that the approach to the recruitment of TAs had changed. The school had become more discerning in appointing TAs and acknowledged that they were now more ready to turn down applicants. This sometimes made it harder to appoint to vacancies.

Though there were some specific criticisms of the head teacher and SENCO seminar, most comments were constructive, aimed at enhancing these events. Some of those who had attended the events indicated that a whole day would have been beneficial. Extending the time might also have enabled some of the other points to be addressed related to the incorporation of more opportunities for discussion, activities based on case studies or vignettes and a better balance between delivery via PowerPoint and active engagement. The criticism of the age of the research and the suggestion that the seminars should have been delivered by practitioners is interesting. The question this prompts is whether, despite being four years old, anything very much has changed in relation to the areas researched. The age is only a relevant consideration if practice had moved on generally in relation to TA deployment and the issues no longer existed or had changed substantially. This also relates to the point that the seminars should have been led by school based practitioners. To be effective these practitioners would need to be from schools that had moved their practice on based on the research and able to communicate to others both the key messages from the research and how schools generally, rather than just their own school, could use this to develop their practice. There is perhaps an implication from the criticism voiced that the complementary but distinctive roles

of the presenters as the experts in the research and attendees as experts in practice needed to be made more explicit within the sessions.

A summary of each case study visit made is included in Appendices 25 – 35.

Chapter 7 Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this evaluation report was to provide not only summative data in relation to Inspired Educators project as it operated in the academic year 2013-14 but to extract from this formative information that could be used to strengthen future iterations. The data gathered suggests that the project already has a lot of strengths and was well received by most who encountered it. There is also ample evidence through the information reported in the questionnaires and case study that there has been an impact on both thinking and practice within schools. Within this section of the report a series of recommendations are presented that are intended to build on the success of this year's iteration of the project and address some of the limited number of weaknesses identified.

Training for the trainers

- Teaching Schools should only be recruited where they have the capacity to release appropriate members of staff to carry out the work, including any ongoing support required for schools that have accessed training.
- Criteria could usefully be developed for Teaching Schools to use when identifying appropriate members of staff to take on the training role. Any selection process should distinguish between essential and desirable criteria in order to allow recognition that, for example, evidence of being an experienced practitioner does not necessarily equate to being an effective trainer.
- Perceived credibility of the trainer is likely to be a factor in the receptiveness of those receiving training from the Teaching Schools. In light of the project's aim of bringing about institutional change it would be desirable for trainers to be a member of the SLT or a SENCO and/or to have been involved, in some way, in the strategic decisions regarding deployment of TAs within their school.
- Selection criteria for trainers might include a minimum level of experience of delivering external training or demonstrated ability in leading staff development activities within their own school.
- Though the training for trainers exposed them to the DISS research, it would be helpful if those taking on the role had some existing knowledge of either this or other reports that have highlighted issues associated with TA deployment. Again, the selection process adopted will be important in ensuring this depth of knowledge.
- Those providing the training for trainers need to manage the expectations of the group by making it explicit that the primary purpose is to equip the participants with the knowledge, skills and understanding to deliver the training in schools. Participants should not expect the training to necessarily model the approach to delivery they would want to use in schools.

- Consideration could be given to the ongoing support available to those from Teaching Schools who are leading the training. This might be through scheduled network meetings but, given the location of the Teaching Schools, some form of online forum may be more practical. As well as allowing the sharing of ideas and resources, it would reinforce the idea that they are delivering locally a national project, underpinned by some common core messages.

Engaging Senior Leadership

- There may be scope to be more forceful in conveying within promotional materials that the head teacher and SENCO seminars are aimed at strategic leaders. Attendees should ideally be in a role where they can lead developments in their schools based on what they hear during the seminar.
- The head teacher and SENCO seminars were generally well received and the questionnaire data suggested that even without a school's further engagement through the teacher INSET these events played a significant role in triggering change. The value of these seminars as standalone events should not be underestimated.
- There were some suggestions from some respondents that head teacher and SENCO seminars would benefit from being more engaging. This might be achieved through the inclusion of additional practical examples of the effective preparation and deployment of TAs, more time built in to encourage discussions between schools and opportunities to reflect on individual school practice and plan what needs to be taken forward.
- Those leading the seminars should seek to manage expectations in order to avoid doubt as to the authority and local knowledge of the trainer. It should be made explicit that the trainers are there to share research and it is recognised that the attendees are the experts by experience and are better equipped to lead discussion on the local situation in terms of deployment.
- Questionnaire responses indicated that many schools were already aware of issues regarding TA deployment and had often taken steps to improve practice. Some form of audit may be helpful in encouraging schools to identify their own stage of development and the next steps relevant for them.
- An 'examples of best practice' guide could usefully be produced which outlines case studies of how schools from across the UK are deploying TAs and making changes to their practice. This would provide further support for schools engaging with the Inspired Educators project through practical examples of strategies they could build into their Action Plans.
- In supporting senior leaders to lead change, consideration could be given to web based resources that they could draw on following the seminar and ongoing support through a centrally run blog and twitter account. Such a network and

associated resources might also help to ensure a higher return rate of post course evaluations through the ongoing relationship with the project.

Engaging Teachers

- There was considerable variation in the models of delivery used by the Teaching Schools for training teachers. These ranged from centralised events for representatives from several schools to school based training for the staff of a single school. The limited data at the three month follow up stage meant that it was not possible to offer a perspective on the impact of different models in the medium term. In terms of delivery of project's aims it will be important to make further attempts to evaluate this.
- In order to increase the focus on whole-school changes, there may be scope to develop the teacher INSET element of the Inspired Educators project to instead target this phase at a 'school champion' for this work identified by the school. This is similar to the coordinator role formerly employed by the Key Stage 3 National Strategy, where a representative of the school attended training led by local consultants and was equipped with the necessary resources to lead training and other developments. The successful Achievement for All school improvement programme uses a school champion model and this may also be worth investigation.
- In developing the preceding point, training could be rationalised, with seminars pitched at head teachers (or other senior leader) accompanied by the 'school champion'. The role of the Teaching School trainer might then take the form of a local consultant working with the 'school champions' in the area and only acting as a leader of INSET when requested by a particular school.
- If the Inspired Educators project adopts a stronger focus on supporting the senior leadership team to lead developments, consideration could be given to developing the INSET for classroom teachers into an online course that the staff team follows. Such a course could adopt a blended learning approach that combines, for example, interactive resources, short video blogs, on-line discussion and exercises.

Communication in Schools

- The case study data indicated that some teachers and TAs were not aware of their school's involvement with Inspired Educator project. Consequently, though often recognising that change was occurring, they were not always sure about the reasons for this. Schools engaging in the project should be encouraged to consider effective methods of disseminating information to all staff in order to secure commitment based on shared understanding of the motivation for, and purpose of, any changes.

- The data indicated that a number of those who attended the head teacher and SENCO seminars were not sure how the TAs were used within their school, and this, alongside the fact that they did not feel able to rate their schools as good or outstanding, is a worry. The development of both a self-evaluation tool and good practice guidance may address these issues.
- Questionnaire data revealed a perception that the role of the TA is not always understood by parents. Schools need to look at how to keep parents informed, especially when making changes to their use of TAs in response to the involvement in the project. A future piece of work through the Inspired Educators project could be to investigate parental understanding of the role of the TA. This could lead to the development of resource materials or training to support schools in communicating more effectively with parents regarding the TA role.
- Given the new SEN Code of Practice's (DFE/DoH 2014) increased emphasis on student voice, it is recommended that the Inspired Educator's project incorporates guidance to schools on how children and young people can be effectively consulted and kept informed in relation to any changes to the TA role.

Evaluation framework

- The pre-seminar and post seminar questionnaires provided useful measures of the changes in thinking prompted by the input and captured immediate priorities for changes in practice identified by attendees. Now that the external evaluation is complete they could usefully be reduced in size to make them less time consuming to complete and easier to manage at the analysis stage.
- For ease of analysis we would recommend the increased use of questions where the responses are useful in their own right in demonstrating impact and a reduction in those that rely on comparison between two data collection points.
- Consideration needs to be given to the future and form of the three month follow up questionnaire. Collection of data on impact after a period of time is potentially very valuable but it relies on the recipient's willingness to complete the survey. A higher response rate is likely to be achieved by a shorter survey provided electronically directly to the intended recipient. This will require collection of proper contact details. It also needs to be conveyed explicitly to attendees at the seminars and other events that evaluation is embedded within the project and they should therefore expect this follow up. Greater 'buy in' might be achieved if the data gathering tool could be designed so that it also served a purpose for the school as a form of self-evaluation.
- The methodology adopted for this evaluation was interpretivist, in that it drew on the perception of respondents in order to comment on impact. It is recommended that in the next round of evaluations, more SMART targets and objectives for the impact of the training could be established that relate to key organisational performance indicators. For example, this might take the form of examining if

attainment has not only improved but statistically significantly improved ($p < 0.05$) in schools whose staff have undertaken the training.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Questionnaire for Trainers

Please complete as many questions as you can, as fully as possible. If you are unsure of an answer please leave it blank and proceed to the next question. Your responses will remain confidential and not be shared with members of your school or employer.

Section 1 Your details

(This information will be kept confidential, however it will allow the researchers to ensure the sample is representative and link each of the surveys in the series).

1. Your Name.....

2. The name and location of your school (Town/City)

3. Current role in school (tick any that apply):

Assistant Head Teacher

Class/Form Teacher

Deputy Head Teacher

Head Teacher

Inclusion Manager

SENCO

Other (please state)

4. For how long have you held QTS? No. years Don't hold QTS

5. Do you hold any qualifications in relation to SEN? (SENCOs should include the National Award for SEN Coordination qualification if completed or currently undertaking) Yes No

5i If, yes please specify.

6. How would you describe your level of experience in leading training for teachers/school staff **from your own school?**

- No experience (this is the first time leading staff training)
- A little experience (have led a very small number of events)
- Experienced (have led quite a few events)
- Very experienced (led a great number of events)

If you have indicated a level of experience please provide brief details

7. How would you describe your level of experience in leading training for teachers/school staff from **other schools/organisations?**

- No experience (this is the first time leading staff training)
- A little experience (have led a very small number of events)
- Experienced (have led quite a few events)
- Very experienced (led a great number of events)

If you have indicated a level of experience please provide brief details

Section 2 Training Objectives & Delivery

8. Thinking about today's session how would you rate the following:

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
The tutor's knowledge and presentation skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Effectiveness of training methods used	<input type="radio"/>				
The quality of the training materials	<input type="radio"/>				

9. In light of the training you have received from Mencap today to what extent do you feel you:

	Not at all									Fully
understand the aims and objectives of the Inset that you will be delivering	<input type="radio"/>									
understand learning disability and why Mencap are delivering this project.	<input type="radio"/>									
understand the research behind Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA)	<input type="radio"/>									
are prepared and confident to deliver this Inset in schools	<input type="radio"/>									
are able to answer the questions of school staff	<input type="radio"/>									
have acquired more knowledge about SEN and inclusion	<input type="radio"/>									
have acquired more knowledge about the effective use of TAs to support/work with pupils with SEN	<input type="radio"/>									

Section 3 Leading INSET Sessions

10. What are you looking forward to most when delivering this Inset in schools?

11. What do you anticipate will be of most interest/benefit to those you train?

12. Please evaluate the following statements in relation to those who you will train.

	① Not at all					a great deal ⑩				
There is a need amongst teaching staff for this training	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Teaching staff will welcome this training	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
This training will be of benefit to teaching staff	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
This training will change working practices for the better	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Additional comments

13. What do you anticipate will be the key challenges when delivering this Inset?

14. Is there any additional information you would like from **Mencap** prior to delivering this INSET to teachers?

Yes No Maybe

If yes, please specify

16. Is there any additional information you plan to **acquire yourself** prior to delivering this INSET to teachers?

Yes No Maybe

If yes, please specify

17. Any additional comments

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix 2: Head teacher and SENCO pre seminar questionnaire

(To be completed prior to attending seminars). Please complete as many questions as you can, as fully as possible, if you are unsure of an answer please leave it blank and proceed to the next question. Your responses will remain confidential and not be shared with members of your school.

This survey asks about Teaching Assistants (TA). We recognise that other terms are in use. Please interpret TA as referring to Learning Support Assistants, Classroom Assistants and other similar role descriptions.

Section 1: Your details

(This information will be kept confidential, however it will allow the researchers to ensure the sample is representative and link each of the survey in the series).

1. Your Name
2. The name and location of your school (Town/City).....
3. Which seminar have you been invited to attend? (Please Tick ✓)

03/10/13	Swiss Cottage teaching School	
29/10/13	Forest Way School	
13/11/13	The Partnership Teaching School (Fiveways School)	
19/11/13	Notre Dame High School	
21/11/13	The Loyne Specialist School	
25/11/13	Town End Academy	

4. Current role in school (tick any that apply):

SENCO

Head teacher

Other (please specify) _____

Yes No

5. Do you hold any qualifications in relation to SEN? (SENCOs should include the National Award for SEN Coordination qualification if completed or currently undertaking)

If yes, please specify.

6. How many Teachers does your school currently employ?

7. Approximately how many TAs does your school currently employ in total (*not just those who have a role in relation to pupils with SEN*)?

8. Approximately how many of the TAs employed by the school routinely spend part or all of their time during the week working with/supporting pupils with SEN?

Section 2: Reasons for attending the seminar

9. Which of these statements most closely represents your reason for choosing to attend the seminar? (please rank your **top three**, 1 being the highest)

	Rank
It is an objective on our school development plan	
It was an opportunity to hear Mencap's perspective on the effective use of TAs	
Growing number of children with SEN	
Wish to improve the effective use of TAs	
Part of our staff development and appraisal system	
To address an issue raised by Ofsted in our school	
Considering rationalising the number of TAs in our school	
Develop my own expertise in this area	
Other (please state)	

Section 3: Role of teaching assistants supporting pupils with SEN

When completing this section please think ONLY about those TAs employed by the school who routinely spend part or all of their time working with/supporting pupils with SEN.

10. How would you describe your school's current practice in relation to the use of Teaching Assistants to support pupils with SEN? (please tick only one)

- Outstanding:
- Good:
- Requires improvement:
- Inadequate:

11. In your school, how are TAs utilised when working with/supporting pupils with SEN?

	Not Sure	Never used	Rarely used	Occasionally used	Often used
Administration (including training/meetings)	<input type="radio"/>				
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	<input type="radio"/>				
Other (please state)	<input type="radio"/>				

12. In your school, how do you feel about the **TIME** TAs spend on the following activities:

	Not sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	<input type="radio"/>				
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	<input type="radio"/>				
Other (please state)	<input type="radio"/>				

Section 4: TAs and their work with colleagues

15. TAs and Teachers: practice and communication in your school

(Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements as they relate to your school).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers are able to work with/manage TAs effectively	<input type="radio"/>				
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom	<input type="radio"/>				
Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs	<input type="radio"/>				
Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms	<input type="radio"/>				
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom	<input type="radio"/>				
Teachers receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions	<input type="radio"/>				
Communication between teachers and TAs is good	<input type="radio"/>				

16. How are TAs who work with/support pupils with SEN regarded in your school?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
TAs are a valuable asset	<input type="radio"/>				
TAs represent good value for money	<input type="radio"/>				
TAs have sufficient skills & knowledge in relation to the national curriculum	<input type="radio"/>				
TAs are most effective when directed/supported by a qualified teacher	<input type="radio"/>				
TAs are well liked by pupils	<input type="radio"/>				
The role of TAs is understood by teachers	<input type="radio"/>				
The role of TAs is understood by parents	<input type="radio"/>				

- | | Yes | No |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 17. Have you received any external evaluation regarding the quality of work /support provided by TAs for pupils with SEN in your school? (e.g. from Local Authority advisors, independent educational consultants or Ofsted) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

17i. If yes, please specify who (please state role, not name)

18. How would you summarise the nature of this feedback?

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Very positive about our practice | <input type="radio"/> |
| Mainly positive, with a few areas for development noted | <input type="radio"/> |
| Some positives but a significant number of areas for development noted, | <input type="radio"/> |
| Very critical of practice | <input type="radio"/> |

Section 5: Any further comments

19. The aim of this questionnaire is to collect information and gauge participant's views before they attend Mencap's Inspired Educators Seminar. Subsequently you will be asked to complete an evaluation of the seminar and a follow up questionnaire to ascertain what impact the seminar has had. However, if you would like to add any additional comments please do so below.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix 3: Head teacher and SENCO post seminar questionnaire

(To be completed at the end of the seminar). Please complete as many questions as you can, as fully as possible. If you are unsure of an answer please leave it blank and proceed to the next question. Your responses will remain confidential and not be shared with members of your school.

This survey asks about Teaching Assistants (TA). We recognise that other terms are in use. Please interpret TA as referring to Learning Support Assistants, Classroom Assistants and other similar role descriptions.

Section 1: Your details

(This information will be kept confidential, however it will allow the researchers to ensure the sample is representative and link each of the survey in the series).

1. Your Name

2. The name and location of your school (Town/City).....

3. Current role in school (tick any that apply):

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| SENCO | <input type="radio"/> |
| Head teacher | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other (please specify) | <input type="radio"/> |

4. Date and location of seminar attended

- | | | |
|----------|---|-----------------------|
| 03.10.13 | Swiss Cottage Teaching School | <input type="radio"/> |
| 29.10.13 | Forest Way School | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13.11.13 | The Partnership Teaching School (Fiveways School) | <input type="radio"/> |
| 19.11.13 | Notre Dame High School | <input type="radio"/> |
| 21.11.13 | The Loyne Specialist School | <input type="radio"/> |
| 25.11.13 | Town End Academy | <input type="radio"/> |

5. Information supplied prior to the seminar. Please rate your satisfaction with the following. *(please tick)*

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Information about the general focus of the seminar	<input type="radio"/>				
Information about location and time of the seminar	<input type="radio"/>				
Registering for the seminar	<input type="radio"/>				

Section 2 Seminar Aims & Delivery

6. Seminar Aims

- Understand why we need to look again at how TAs are used
- Take a closer look at factors that affect TA effectiveness
- Ask some important questions about the role and purpose of TAs
- Explore things you can do differently: *Maximising the Impact of TAs*

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
The extent to which the seminar aims were met?	<input type="radio"/>				
The tutor's knowledge and presentation skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Effectiveness of the methods of presentation/teaching methods used	<input type="radio"/>				
The quality of the materials	<input type="radio"/>				

7. In light of the input you have received from today to what extent do you feel you:

	Not at all									Fully
Understand learning disability and why Mencap are delivering this project.	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Understand the research behind Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants (MITA)	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Have acquired more knowledge about SEN and inclusion	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Have acquired more knowledge about the effective use of TAs to support/work with pupils with SEN	<input type="radio"/>									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Section 3: Impact on perceptions of current practice

This section revisits some of the themes and specific questions from the pre session survey.

When completing the questions for this section please think ONLY about those TAs employed by the school who routinely spend part or all of their time working with/supporting pupils with SEN.

8. In the light of what you have heard today, how would you describe your school's current practice in relation to the use of Teaching Assistants to support pupils with SEN? (please tick only one)

- Outstanding:
- Good:
- Requires improvement:
- Inadequate:

9. In the light of what you have heard today, how do you now feel about the **TIME** TAs in your school spend on the following activities:

	Not sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	<input type="radio"/>				
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please specify activity and view on time spent):

10. In the light of what you have heard today, how **EFFECTIVE** do you now feel your school's use of TAs is in relation to the following activities?

	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	<input type="radio"/>				
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please specify activity and view on effectiveness):

Section 4: Areas for Development and Action Planning

11. In light of today's input which of these areas do you think may be in need of development in your school:
(Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements as they relate to your school).

We need to develop our practice in relation to:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers' ability to work with/manage TAs effectively	<input type="radio"/>				
How well TAs are informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom	<input type="radio"/>				
The opportunities teachers have to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs	<input type="radio"/>				
The opportunities teachers have to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms	<input type="radio"/>				
How well TAs are informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom	<input type="radio"/>				
The feedback teachers receive from TA led interventions	<input type="radio"/>				
The quality of communication between teachers and TAs	<input type="radio"/>				
Teachers' understanding of effective methods of utilising TAs to support/work with pupils with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please specify):

12. Do you intend to develop an action plan in response to issues raised by today's input?

Yes, we intend to develop an action plan	<input type="radio"/>
No, there are no significant areas for development for us in relation to the use of TAs	<input type="radio"/>
No, TA use is already part of our school improvement plan (or other action plan)	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify):

13. Do you intend to send any teachers to the INSET sessions that form part of the Inspired Educators project?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Section 5: Any further comments

14. The aim of this questionnaire is to collect information and gauge participant' views having attended Mencap's Inspired Educators seminar. Later in the academic year you will receive a follow up questionnaire to ascertain the longer term impact of the seminar. However, if you would like to add any additional comments please do so below.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please hand it back to the seminar lead

Appendix 4: Teacher Pre INSET questionnaire

(To be completed prior to attending seminars). Please complete as many questions as you can, as fully as possible, if you are unsure of an answer please leave it blank and proceed to the next question. Your responses will remain confidential and not be shared with members of your school.

Section 1 Your details

(This information will be kept confidential, however it will allow the researchers to ensure the sample is representative and link each of the survey in the series).

1. Your Name

2. The name and location of your school (Town/City).....

3. What type of school do you work in?

- Primary School
- Primary Academy
- Primary Free School
- Primary & Secondary ('all through') Academy
- Secondary wide ability school
- Secondary Academy
- Secondary Free School
- Grammar school
- Independent
- Special
- Other (please state)

4. Approximately how many pupils are on role? (2013-2014)?

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Less than
150 | 151-300 | 301-500 | 501-1000 | 1001-2000 | 2000+ |
| <input type="radio"/> |

4i. Approximately what proportion of these are on the SEN register?.....
(for these purposes SEN is considered School Action, School Action Plus or Statement SEN)

5. Approximately how many Teachers and TAs does your school currently employ?

Teachers	TAs	Don't know

6. What is your role in school? (please *tick any that apply*):

- Classroom teacher
- SEN support teacher
- SENCO
- Inclusion leader/manager
- Head of Department/subject coordinator
- Head of Year
- Head of Key Stage/Key Stage manager
- Assistant head teacher
- Deputy head teacher
- Head teacher/Principal
- Other (please specify)

6i. Approximately how much of your time per week is contractually allocated to class or group teaching responsibilities (including designated Planning, Preparation and Assessment time).

Less than 1 day	<input type="radio"/>
1 day	<input type="radio"/>
2 days	<input type="radio"/>
3 days	<input type="radio"/>
4 days	<input type="radio"/>
5 days	<input type="radio"/>

7. Do you hold Qualified Teacher status? Yes No

7i If, yes for how long have you held QTS?

- Less than 1
year
- 1- 3 years
- 4-10 years
- More than 10
years

8. Do you hold any qualifications in relation to SEN? (*SENCOs should include the National Award for SEN Coordination qualification if completed or currently undertaking*) Yes No

8i If, yes If yes please specify

Section 2 Reasons for attending this session

9. Which of these statements MOST closely represents your reason for choosing to attend the session? (please select 1 only)

- It links to an identified development need in our school regarding the use of TAs
- Growing number of children with SEN
- Wish to improve the effective use of TAs
- Part of our staff development and appraisal system
- To address an issue raised by Ofsted
- Personal development/CPD
- Other (please state)

Section 3 Use of Teaching and value of teaching assistants

When completing this section please think ONLY about those TAs employed by the school who routinely spend part or all of their time working with/supporting pupils with SEN.

10. How would you describe your school's current practice in relation to the use of Teaching Assistants to support pupils with SEN? (please tick only one)

- Outstanding:
- Good:
- Requires improvement:
- Inadequate:

11. **In your school**, how are TAs generally utilised when working with/supporting pupils with SEN?

	Not Sure	Never used	Rarely used	Occasionally used	Often used
Administration (including training/meetings)	<input type="radio"/>				
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for	<input type="radio"/>				

children (groups or individuals) with SEN

Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)

Other (please state)

12. How do you feel about the **TIME** TAs spend on the following activities in your school:

	Not sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	<input type="radio"/>				
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	<input type="radio"/>				
Other (please state)	<input type="radio"/>				

13. When **you have responsibility** for their deployment, how do you use TAs to work with/support pupils with SEN?

	Not Sure	Never used	Rarely used	Occasionally used	Often used
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with individual children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				

out of class

Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN

Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)

Other (please state)

14. How **EFFECTIVE** do you feel the use of TAs is in relation to the following activities?

	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	<input type="radio"/>				
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	<input type="radio"/>				
Other (please state)	<input type="radio"/>				

15. How do you regard the TAs who work with/support pupils with SEN in your school/class? (*please note any responses will remain confidential*).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
TAs are a valuable asset	<input type="radio"/>				
TAs represent good value for money	<input type="radio"/>				
TAs have sufficient skills & knowledge in relation to the national curriculum	<input type="radio"/>				
TAs are most effective when directed/supported by a	<input type="radio"/>				

qualified teacher

TAs are well liked by pupils

The role of TAs is understood by teachers

The role of TAs is understood by parents

Yes No

16. Have you received any feedback regarding the use of TAs within your lessons? (e.g. from your colleagues including SLT/SENCO, Local Authority advisors, independent educational consultants or Ofsted)

16i. If yes, please specify who (please state role, not name)

17. How would you summarise the nature of this feedback?

Very positive about our practice
Mainly positive, with a few areas for development noted
Some positives but a significant number of areas for development noted,
Very critical of practice

Section 5 – Any further comments

18. The aim of this questionnaire is to collect information and gauge participants' views before they attend Mencap's Inspired Educators Seminar. Subsequently you will be asked to complete an evaluation of the seminar and a follow up questionnaire to ascertain what impact the seminar has had. However, if at this point you would like to add any additional comments please do so below.

Comments

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix 5: Teacher post INSET questionnaire

Please complete as many questions as you can, as fully as possible, if you are unsure of an answer please leave it blank and proceed to the next question. Your responses will remain confidential and not be shared with members of your school.

Section 1 Your details and registration

(This information will be kept confidential, however it will allow the researchers to ensure the sample is representative and link each of the survey in the series).

1. Your Name.....

2. The name and location of your school.....

3. Which teaching school provided the INSET that you attended:

- Forest Way School
- The Loyne Specialist School
- Notre Dame High School
- The Partnership Teaching School
- Swiss Cottage School
- Town End Academy

4. Name of inset leader.....

5. Information supplied prior to the training/inset. Please rate your satisfaction with the following. (please tick)

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Information about the aims of the training	<input type="radio"/>				
Information about location and time of the training	<input type="radio"/>				
Registering for the training/inset	<input type="radio"/>				

Section 2 Objectives & Delivery

6. Aims:

- Understand why we need to look at how TAs are used
- Take a closer look at factors that affect TA effectiveness
- Ask some important questions about the role and purpose of TAs
- Explore things you can do differently: *Maximising the Impact of TAs*

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
The extent to which the aims were met?	<input type="radio"/>				
The tutor's knowledge and presentation skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Effectiveness of the methods used	<input type="radio"/>				
The quality of the materials	<input type="radio"/>				

Section 3: Impact on perceptions of current practice

This section revisits some of the themes and specific questions from the pre session survey.

When completing the questions for this section please think ONLY about those TAs employed by the school who routinely spend part or all of their time working with/supporting pupils with SEN.

7. In the light of what you have heard today, how would you describe your school's current practice in relation to the use of Teaching Assistants to support pupils with SEN? (*please tick only one*)

- Outstanding:
- Good:
- Requires improvement:
- Inadequate:

8. In the light of what you have heard today, how do you now feel about the **TIME** TAs in your school spend on the following activities:

	Not sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	<input type="radio"/>				
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please specify):

9. In the light of what you have heard today, how **EFFECTIVE** do you now feel your school's use of TAs is in relation to the following activities?

	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	<input type="radio"/>				
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please specify):

Section 4: Areas for Development and Action Planning

10. Where you have responsibility for the deployment of TAs do you plan to make any changes in light of today's input?

- Not sure
- I do not presently plan to make changes
- I may change how I use TAs after some thought
- I plan to change the way I use TAs who work with children with SEN
- I plan to change the way I use all TAs

Other please state

11. In which of these areas do you intend to change the way you use TAs when working with/supporting pupils with SEN?

	Not Sure	No change	Minor changes	Substantial change
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting/working with individual children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please state) <input style="width: 300px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. In light of today's input in which of these areas do you think your school needs to develop/improve its practice:
(Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements as they relate to your school).

We need to develop our practice in relation to:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
How well TAs are informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom	<input type="radio"/>				
The opportunities teachers have to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs	<input type="radio"/>				
The opportunities teachers have to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms	<input type="radio"/>				
How well TAs are informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom	<input type="radio"/>				
The feedback teachers receive from TA led interventions	<input type="radio"/>				

13. If you do intend to make changes to the way you deploy TAs who work with/support children with SEN, we would be grateful for any additional information you can provide regarding your intentions.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix 6: Head teacher and SENCO three month follow up questionnaire

Please complete as many questions as you can, as fully as possible. If you are unsure of an answer please leave it blank and proceed to the next question. Your responses will remain confidential and not be shared with members of your school.

Section 1 Your details and registration

(This information will be kept confidential, however it will allow the researchers to ensure the sample is representative and link each of the surveys in the series).

1. Your Name.....

2. The name and location of your school.....

3. Did you attend the Head teacher and SENCO seminar at the start of the project?

Yes
No

3i. If yes which seminar did you attend?

03/10/13	Swiss Cottage teaching School	<input type="radio"/>
29/10/13	Forest Way School	<input type="radio"/>
13/11/13	The Partnership Teaching School (Fiveways School)	<input type="radio"/>
19/11/13	Notre Dame High School	<input type="radio"/>
21/11/13	The Loyne Specialist School	<input type="radio"/>
25/11/13	Town End Academy	<input type="radio"/>

4. Did any of your teachers attend/receive any INSET provided by the Teaching Schools?

Yes
No

5. As part of your school's involvement in the project was an action plan developed (or action points incorporated into an existing school improvement plan)?

Yes
No

6. Which of the following broad areas did your action points relate to:
(tick any that apply)?

How we use TAs to provide in class general support with a focus on those with SEN

How we use TAs to support/work with *individual* children with SEN on a one to one basis **in class**

How we use TAs to support/work with *groups* of children with SEN **in class**

How we use TAs to take *individual* children with SEN out of class and support/work with them one to one

How we use TAs to take *groups* of children with SEN out of class and support/work with them

How we use TAs to undertake specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN

The ability of our Teachers' to work with/manage TAs effectively

How well prepared our TAs are to undertake SEN related work within classrooms

How well prepared our TAs are to undertake SEN related interventions outside the classroom

Other (please state)

Other/additional information in relation to proposed actions

Section 2: Impact on perceptions of current school practice

This section revisits some of the themes and specific questions from the previous surveys.

We intend to compare views on current practice with those expressed by respondents at the two previous data collection points in order to identify any discernible changes

When completing the questions for this section please think ONLY about those TAs employed by the school who routinely spend part or all of their time working with/supporting pupils with SEN.

7. How would you describe your school's **current practice** in relation to the use of Teaching Assistants to support pupils with SEN? (please tick only one)

- Outstanding:
- Good:
- Requires improvement:
- Inadequate:

8. How do you feel about the **TIME** TAs in your school currently spend on the following activities:

	Not sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	<input type="radio"/>				
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please specify):

9. How **EFFECTIVE** do you feel your school's current use of TAs is in relation to the following activities?

	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	<input type="radio"/>				
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please specify):

10. **TAs and Teachers: practice and communication in your school**

(Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements as they relate to your school).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers work with/manage TAs effectively	<input type="radio"/>				
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom	<input type="radio"/>				
Teachers have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs	<input type="radio"/>				
Teachers have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within their classrooms	<input type="radio"/>				
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom	<input type="radio"/>				
Teachers receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions	<input type="radio"/>				
Communication between teachers and TAs is good	<input type="radio"/>				
Teachers have an understanding of effective methods to utilise TAs	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please specify):

Section 3: Impact of Mencap Project on TA use within and outside the classroom

This section revisits many of the same themes as Section 2, but provides the opportunity for you to indicate directly the specific changes which might be linked to your engagement with the Mencap project.

11. Since involvement in the Mencap project, how has the **TIME** TAs spend on the following activities changed?

	Never Been Used	Not Sure	Decreased	Stayed about the same	Increased
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with individual children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	<input type="radio"/>				
Other (please state) <input style="width: 300px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>				

Additional comments (in particular it would be useful to provide any examples of ways in which changes have been positive).

12. Since involvement in the Mencap project, how do you perceive that the **EFFECTIVENESS** of work undertaken in these areas has changed?

	Never Been Used	Not Sure	No change	Minor Improvement	Substantial Improvement
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with individual children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	<input type="radio"/>				
Other (please state) <input style="width: 200px; height: 15px;" type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>				

13. If there are any specific changes you have identified in how teachers liaise with or deploy TAs who work with/support children with SEN, we would be grateful for any additional information you can provide.

14. Overall, which of these statements most closely represents your view on the impact on your school's practice of involvement with the Mencap *Inspired Educators* project.

- A major impact**, with clearly identifiable changes in our practice across the school
- Some impact**, with some specific areas of practice being strengthened
- Some impact** at the level of thinking about ways of using TAs, but no discernible changes in practice
- Minimal impact** because the training confirmed our practice was already very good in this area
- Minimal or no impact** because the training provided did not address our needs
- Minimal or no impact** because we have other, more pressing, school improvement priorities currently

Any other comment:

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Section 4: Lessons learned.

It would be very helpful to capture your reflections on both the impact of the Mencap project and lessons learned from it, to share with other schools interested in engaging with this project in the future.

15. If you could offer advice to another school on how to get the most benefit from engagement with the Inspired Educators Project, what would this be?

1.	
----	--

2.	
----	--

3.	
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16. What parts of the Mencap project have you found most useful in your practice?

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17. What parts have you found of least use in your practice?

18. Would you recommend involvement in the Inspired Educators projects to colleagues in another school?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Any other comments

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix 7: Teacher three month follow up questionnaire

Please complete as many questions as you can, as fully as possible. If you are unsure of an answer please leave it blank and proceed to the next question. Your responses will remain confidential and not be shared with members of your school.

Section 1 Your details and registration

(This information will be kept confidential, however it will allow the researchers to ensure the sample is representative and link each of the surveys in the series).

1. Your Name.....
2. The name and location of your school.....
3. Did you attend/receive INSET delivered as part of this project?

If no please skip to Section 2, question 8

- Yes
- No

4. If yes which Teaching School delivered the INSET?
 - Swiss Cottage teaching School
 - Forest Way School
 - The Partnership Teaching School (Fiveways School)
 - Notre Dame High School
 - The Loyne Specialist School
 - Town End Academy
 - Swiss Cottage teaching School
 - The Partnership Teaching School (Fiveways School)
 - The Partnership Teaching School (Fosse Way School)

5. Name of INSET leader(s)

6. How was the training delivered?

- | | | | |
|--------------------|---|--|------------------------------------|
| Audience | Your school
<input type="radio"/> | Several Schools
<input type="radio"/> | |
| Length of session | Less than one hour
<input type="radio"/> | 1-2 hours
<input type="radio"/> | 2 hours +
<input type="radio"/> |
| Number of sessions | Single
<input type="radio"/> | Multiple
<input type="radio"/> | |

7. Do you think the mode of delivery was effective?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Any comments

Section 2: Impact on perceptions of current school practice

This section revisits some of the themes and specific questions from the previous surveys. We intend to compare views on current practice with those expressed by respondents at the two previous data collection points in order to identify any discernible changes. When completing the questions for this section please think ONLY about those TAs employed by the school who routinely spend part or all of their time working with/supporting pupils with SEN.

8. How would you describe your school's **current practice** in relation to the use of Teaching Assistants to support pupils with SEN? *(please tick only one)*

- Outstanding:
- Good:
- Requires improvement:
- Inadequate:

9. How do you feel about the **TIME** TAs in your school currently spend on the following activities:

	Not sure	Never used	Too much	About right	Too little
Administration (including training/meetings)	<input type="radio"/>				
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please state and indicate your view on time spent):

10. How **EFFECTIVE** do you feel your school's current use of TAs is in relation to the following activities?

	Never Used	Ineffective	Not sure	Somewhat Effective	Very Effective
Administration (including training/meetings)	<input type="radio"/>				
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>individual</i> children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with <i>groups</i> of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please state and indicate your view on the effectiveness):

11. **TAs and Teachers: practice and communication in your school**

(Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements as they relate to your school).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am able to work with/manage TAs effectively	<input type="radio"/>				
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working inside the classroom	<input type="radio"/>				
I have sufficient opportunity to receive feedback about pupils' learning and progress from TAs	<input type="radio"/>				
I have sufficient opportunity to prepare and guide TAs who undertake SEN related work within my classroom	<input type="radio"/>				
TAs are well informed about the support they are expected to provide for pupils with SEN when working outside the classroom	<input type="radio"/>				
I receive sufficient feedback from TA led interventions	<input type="radio"/>				
Communication between teachers and TAs is good	<input type="radio"/>				
I have sufficient understanding of effective methods of supporting pupils with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please state):

Impact on TA use within and outside the classroom

This section revisits some of the same themes as Section 2, but provides the opportunity for you to indicate directly the specific changes which might be linked to your engagement with the Mencap project.

12. Since involvement in the Mencap project, how do you perceive that the EFFECTIVENESS of work undertaken in these areas has changed?

	Never Been Used	Not Sure	No change	Minor Improvement	Substantial Improvement
In class general support with a focus on those with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with individual children with SEN on a one to one basis in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN in class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with individual children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Supporting/working with groups of children with SEN out of class	<input type="radio"/>				
Undertaking specialist interventions or programmes for children (groups or individuals) with SEN	<input type="radio"/>				
Supervising children (e.g. time outs/emotionally/escorting)	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please state and indicate your view of improvement)

Personal development in the use of TAs

13. This question refers specifically to TAs who work within your classroom

Since my school's involvement with the project:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree
I am clearer about what represents good practice in TA deployment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am aware of a broader range of effective methods of TA deployment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am more confident that the ways I utilise TAs within my lessons represent good practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to work with/manage TAs more effectively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am better at briefing TAs on the support they need to provide within my lessons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The quality and/or quantity of feedback TAs provide for me has improved	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Within my lesson plans I am better at planning for the use of TAs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am more confident that TAs understand their role within the lesson	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am better able to show the impact of TAs on the quality of teaching and learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My working relationship with TAs has improved	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The TAs I work with have grown in confidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am more confident that our use of TAs represents value for money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please state)

14. If there are any specific changes you have made to the way you liaise with or deploy TAs who work with/support children with SEN, we would be grateful for any additional information you can provide.

15. Overall, which of these statements most closely represents your view on the impact on your school's practice of involvement with the Mencap Inspired Educators project.

(Please tick only one)

- A major impact, with clearly identifiable changes in practice across the school
- Some impact, with some specific areas of practice being strengthened
- Some impact at the level of thinking about ways of using TAs, but no discernible changes in practice
- Minimal impact because the training confirmed practice was already very good in this area
- Minimal or no impact because the training provided did not address the school's needs
- Minimal or no impact because we have other, more pressing, school improvement priorities currently

Any other comments

16. If you feel that involvement in the project has made minimal or no impact on your practice, what additional support might facilitate future change?

- Additional Seminars
- Staff training event(s) – regionally
- Staff training event(s) – within school
- Networking opportunities
- On-line resources
- Training packs
- Other (please state)

Any other comments

17. If you could offer advice to another school on how to get the most benefit from engagement with the Inspired Educators Project, what would this be?

1.	
----	--

2.	
----	--

3.	
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18. If you could offer advice to another school on how to improve practice and use of TAs, when working with children with SEN, what would this be?

1.	
----	--

2.	
----	--

3.	
----	--

19. What aspects of the Mencap project have you found most useful in your practice

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20. What aspects have you found of least use in your practice?

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21. Would you recommend involvement in the Inspired Educators project to colleagues in another school?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Any other comments

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix 8: Head teacher (or other senior leader) – individual interview

Preamble

As you know your school has engaged with the Mencap Inspired Educators Project. The project is a collaboration between Mencap and <INSERT NAME OF LOCAL TEACHING SCHOOL>, who hosted a Seminar that was delivered by Mencap and Dr Anthony Russell from the Institute of Education. Different models of delivery have been used. You may have attended an initial seminar and some or all of your teachers may have attended training led by a Teaching School. We are interested in hearing about your experience of engagement with the project and the degree of impact on practice.

- Q1. You attended the Inspired Educators seminar on _____ at _____ . How useful did you find this?**
- Q2. Why did the school choose to access the training available through the Mencap project?**
- Q3. Prior to your school's involvement with the project did you think there were any particular issues with how TAs were deployed and used in the school generally?**
- Q4. Following the seminar did you draw up an action plan to develop the school's practice in the use of TAs?**
- Q5. Did you have a particular approach to disseminate the ideas more widely amongst staff who did not receive direct input through the seminars or the training provided by the Teaching School?**
- Q6. Has the school changed any policies regarding the use of TAs in response to your school's involvement with the Mencap project?**
- Q7. What changes has the school made in the way TAs are deployed and used to support pupils with SEN as result of involvement in the Inspired Educators project?**
- Q8. Have you encountered any difficulties in taking forward changes as part of the project?**

- Q9.** Are there particular things your school has done – or factors about your school – that have contributed to your successful engagement with the project?
- Q.10** Have you engaged outside services to help you in this process?
- Q11.** According to our information _____ teachers from your school accessed the Mencap training. What can you tell us about the impact of this on both their own practice and on practice in the school generally?
- Q12.** Do you possess any evidence of a positive impact on pupil progress as a result of involvement in the Mencap Project?
- Q13.** I've asked you about changes in policy and practice but do you think there have been any changes in attitudes or beliefs regarding the use of TAs to support pupils with SEN?
- Q14.** To what extent, if any, do you think involvement with the Mencap project has contributed to the development of more inclusive practices in the school?
- Q15.** Thinking wider than just this project, what, if any, are the barriers for you as a school to developing more inclusive practices?
- Q16.** Based on your experiences, what advice would you give to another school to help them get the most out of engagement with the Mencap project?
- Q17.** Is there anything else you would suggest either Mencap or the Teaching Schools delivering the training could do to improve the project or provide additional support to schools to enable students with SEN to reach their academic potential?
- Q18.** You received a MITA book free of charge after the session. Did you find the book useful? Has it helped you implement practical changes?

Appendix 9: Individual interview with SENCO

Preamble

As you know your school has engaged with the Mencap Inspired Educators Project. Different models of delivery have been used. You may have attended an initial seminar and some or all of your teachers may have attended training led by a Teaching School. We are interested in hearing about your experience of engagement with the project and the degree of impact on practice.

- Q1.** You attended the Inspired Educators seminar on _____ at _____ . How useful did you find this?
- Q2.** Why did the school choose to access the training available through the Mencap project?
- Q3.** Prior to your school's involvement with the project did you think there were any particular issues with how TAs were deployed and used by the school generally?
- Q4.** Following the seminar, was an action plan drawn up to develop the school's practice in the use of TAs?
- Q5.** Did the school adopt a particular approach to disseminate the ideas more widely amongst staff who did not receive direct input through the seminars or the training provided by the Teaching School?
- Q6.** Can you talk us through how as SENCO you have been involved in developments resulting from the school's engagement with this project?
- Q7.** Have any policies changed regarding the use of TAs in response to your school's involvement with the Mencap project?
- Q8.** What changes have you seen in the way TAs are deployed and used to support pupils with SEN as a result of involvement in the Inspired Educators project?
- Q9.** Have you had any feedback from TAs about any changes implemented as part of engagement with the project?

- Q10. Are you aware of any difficulties the school has encountered in taking forward changes as part of the project?**
- Q11. Are there particular things your school has done – or factors about your school – that have contributed to your successful engagement with the project?**
- Q12. How do you think the quality of support provided by Teaching Assistants for pupils with SEN has been affected by the school's involvement with the project?**
- Q13. Do you think any changes in practice made as a result of involvement in the Mencap Project have impacted on pupil progress?**
- Q14. I've asked you about changes in policy and practice but do you think there have been any changes in attitudes or beliefs regarding the use of TAs to support pupils with SEN?**
- Q15. To what extent, if any, do you think involvement with the Mencap project has contributed to the development of more inclusive practices in the school?**
- Q16. Thinking wider than just this project, what, if any, are the barriers for you as a school to developing more inclusive practices?**
- Q17. Based on your experiences, what advice would you give to another school to help them get the most out of engagement with the Mencap project?**
- Q18. Is there anything else you would suggest either Mencap or the Teaching Schools delivering the training could do to improve the project or provide additional support to schools to enable students with SEN to reach their academic potential?**
- Q19. You received a MITA book free of charge after the session. Did you find the book useful? Has it helped you implement practical changes?**

Appendix 10: Teacher Interview (Group interview)

Preamble

As you know your school has engaged with the Mencap Inspired Educators Project. Different models of delivery have been used. Your Head, SENCO or other member of the senior leadership team may have attended an initial seminar and some or all of you may have attended training led by a Teaching School. We are interested in hearing about your experience of engagement with the project and the degree of impact on practice.

- Q1. Did you receive direct training input from one of the Teaching Schools as part of Mencap's Inspired Educators Project?**

- Q2. Prior to your school's involvement with the project did you think there were any particular issues with how TAs were deployed and used either by you or the school generally?**

- Q3. What can you tell us about the impact of your school's involvement in the Inspired Educator's Project on your own classroom practice?**

- Q4. What changes, if any, has the school made generally in the way TAs are deployed and used to support pupils with SEN as a result of involvement in the Inspired Educators project?**

- Q5. Are there particular things your school has done – or factors about your school – that have contributed to its successful engagement with the project?**

- Q6. How do you think the quality of support provided by Teaching Assistants you work with has been affected by the school's involvement with the project?**

- Q7. Do you think any changes made as a result of involvement in the Mencap Project have impacted on pupil progress?**

- Q8. Do you think engagement in the project has caused you to question or change any of your ideas or general beliefs about how TAs are used to support pupils with SEN?**

- Q9. To what extent, if any, do you think involvement with the Mencap project has contributed to the development of more inclusive practices in the school?**
- Q10. Thinking wider than just this project, what, if any, are the barriers for you as a school to developing more inclusive practices?**
- Q11. Based on your experiences what advice would you give to another school to help them get the most out of engagement with the Mencap project?**
- Q12. Is there anything else you would suggest either Mencap or the Teaching Schools delivering the training could do to improve the project or provide additional support to schools to enable students with SEN to reach their academic potential?**

Appendix 11: Teaching Assistant interview (group)

Preamble

As you know your school has engaged with the Mencap Inspired Educators Project. Different models of delivery have been used. Your Head, SENCO or other member of the senior leadership team may have attended an initial seminar and some or all of the teachers may have attended training led by a Teaching School. We are interested in hearing about your experience of the school's involvement with the project and the degree of impact on practice.

- Q1. What can you tell us about how your school's involvement in the Inspired Educators Project has affected how you are used to support pupils with SEN?**

- Q2. Have you been given any additional training or attended any meetings in connection with the school's involvement in the Inspired Educators Project?**

- Q3. Have you noticed any changes in guidance you are given by teachers and others on how you are expected to support particular pupils?**

- Q4. Have you had opportunities to talk with the teacher about the type of support you are required to provide since your school engaged in the Inspired Educators project?**

- Q5. What changes, if any, have you noticed generally in the way Teaching Assistants are deployed and used to support pupils with SEN as a result of involvement in the Inspired Educators project?**

- Q6. I've asked you about changes in policy and practice but do you think there have been any changes in attitudes or beliefs from SLT or Teachers in relation to support for pupils with SEN?**

- Q7. Are there particular things your school has done – or factors about your school – that have contributed to its successful engagement with the project?**

- Q8. How do you think the quality of support you provide as a TA has been affected by the school's involvement with the project?**

- Q9. Is there anything else that you think your school needs to do to improve the way in which TAs are used to support pupils with SEN?**
- Q10. Do you feel that you have a clearer idea about how you can best support children with SEN/ your role and expectations in the classroom?**
- Q11. Do you feel more supported in your role as TA?**
- Q12. What resources or changes would enable you to provide better support to children with SEN or to include children with SEN better in the classroom?**

Appendix 12: Examples given by trainers of training led for teachers/school staff from their own school

- Facilitation of CPD - whole school and department.
- Lectured and led training up to and including M level. Planned, written and delivered huge amounts of CPD on SEN for schools, families and other audiences across 30 years both nationally and internationally. Planned and presented conferences.
- Countless, teachers, TA and support staff, training meetings and INSET, leadership training etc.
- Training for ASD, for teacher and parents.
- Groups INSET, training TAs, planning sessions, teacher meetings, twilight sessions.
- I lead sessions for trainee teachers, INSET for school staff and some training for individual teachers to support them with specific children in mainstream schools.
- ITP/TP trained facilitator. SLE and consultant for 5+yrs, Head of Dept, 16 yrs.
- In house training (SEN) Input (SEN) INSETs and at SENCO Meetings. Safeguarding – whole staff training.
- Most INSETs and staff meetings. TA/parents/Teachers.
- As part of my SLE role I have held inset day.
- Support for HI pupils in mainstream. Support for mainstream teachers to support HI pupils. Training in Early years assessment in mainstream schools for teachers. Training in including HI pupils in mainstream. Training in supporting reading for HT and SEN pupils in mainstream.
- Delivering session on new PSCHE resources.
- Delivering Inset, facilitating training.
- 5 years school improvement/training role.
- INSETs, teacher meetings.
- Involved in county training-supporting schools in developing interventions/new issues in SEN/School structure and provision etc. Within school – staff meetings, also school to school support within community learning partnerships.

- I deliver regular training in school for CPD.
- I have run, and continue to run, services for whole staff (e.g. Behaviour management, safeguarding) as well as group sessions (e.g. Assessment for learning). I was CPD coordinator for a number of years until a very recent change in role due to the departure of another colleague.
- Frequently lead whole school teaching and non-teaching INSET in a variety of SEN and literacy related issues, e.g. dyslexia, autism, BESD, reading, phonics, SEN intervention.
- Mostly to do with SEN strategies, inclusion, differentiation.
- INSET.
- CPD in school.

Appendix 13: Examples given by trainers of training they had led for teachers/school staff from outside their own school

- Head of regional network for SSAT delivering CPD across north east, including national conference facilitation (2000 HTs). Developing and delivering CPD/government changes to HTs, SLT & classroom teachers. Working with professors on dissemination of research, developing student leadership to 1000 pupils/staff. Lead practitioner for several subjects.
- Seminar workshops and conferences.
- Training for ASD for mainstream schools.
- At SENCO meetings.
- GTC project in London.
- In previous role I led whole school training on: new curriculum, change to assessment requirements of teaching and learning, teachers' role and responsibilities.

Appendix 14: Additional comments made on the training provided for trainers

- This was a ‘train the trainer’ event led by the Institute of Education and not one led by a Teaching School and it was very ‘behind the times’ in terms of how to facilitate training to teachers (didactic and repetitive).
- Thanks for the opportunity.
- I do not mean to be negative, but I am concerned about the way that training will be delivered to head teachers and SENCOs. Today’s model is not an effective way of delivering training, i.e. being ‘talked at’ with **very** little time for reflection. I was very keen to attend this training because I believe there is a need for it. I do not want the valuable opportunity to be missed
- An extremely useful session. Trainers were very responsive to suggestions of tweaks and changes
- Thank you – very interesting and thought provoking
- A very worthwhile venture and the kind of thing Teaching Schools should do to prove their effectiveness.
- Really a lot to take in, in a 1 day session!
- Enjoyed the day!
- I think it is fantastic. I worry about some of the other trainers in the room not having a clear vision of this!!
- A very clear and practical approach to ensure confidence and ability of the trainers. Thank you
- Excellent day, many thanks. Would it be possible to have a brief ‘crib’ sheet of the key points we need to say? I have made lots of notes, but worry that whilst writing I may have missed something.

Appendix 15: Other roles identified within the head teacher and SENCO pre seminar questionnaire

Role	% (N)	Role	% (N)
Acting Deputy Head/Vice Principal	1.8% (3)	HR Director	0.4% (1)
Acting SENCO (covering maternity leave)	0.4% (1)	Independent Consultant and SIP delivering the L4 Teaching	0.4% (1)
Assistant Head/Principal	6.4% (17)	Integrated Resource Leader	0.4% (1)
Assistant SENCO	1.8% (3)	Learning Support Advisory Teacher	0.4% (1)
Deputy SENCO	1.8% (5)	Learning support coordinator/manager	0.8% (2)
Deputy Head/Vice Principal	5.4% (15)	Nursery manager	0.4% (1)
Deputy Head & SENCO	0.7% (2)	SEN/SEND manager	0.7% (2)
Director of Learning	0.4% (1)	Senior leader	0.4% (1)
		Senior Support Practitioner	0.4% (1)
Head & SENCO	2.5% (7)	Senior Teacher	0.4% (1)
Head of Inclusion	0.8% (2)	SLT - Phase Leader/ Assessment, KS2 leader	0.8% (2)
Head of Middle School	0.4% (1)	Specialist teacher	0.4% (1)
HLTA 1 support	0.4% (1)	Team Leader of support services to schools	0.4% (1)
HLTA and member of SLT Line Manager for TAs	0.4% (1)		

Appendix 16: Other roles identified in the head teacher and SENCO post seminar questionnaire

Other roles	% (N)
Advisor/Trainer	0.4% (1)
Advisory Teacher	0.4% (1)
Acting Deputy Head/Vice Principal	2.2% (6)
Assistant Head/Principal	6.0% (16)
Assistant SENCO	0.4% (1)
Deputy SENCO	0.7% (2)
Deputy Head/Vice Principal	3.7% (10)
Deputy Head & SENCO	1.5% (4)
Educational Consultant	0.4% (1)
Head & SENCO	2.2% (6)
Head of Primary School Improvement	0.4% (1)
HLTA and member of SLT Line Manager for TA's	0.4% (1)
HR Director	0.4% (1)
Inclusion Manager	0.4% (1)
Learning support coordinator/manager	0.4% (1)
SEN/SEND manager	0.7% (2)
Senior Teacher	0.7% (2)
Specialist teacher	0.4% (1)

Appendix 17: Number of Teachers and TAs employed, as provided in head teacher and SENCO pre seminar questionnaire

Teachers employed		TAs employed		TAs working/supporting SEN	
Number	% (N)	Number	% (N)	Number	% (N)
1	1	1	-	1	0.4% (1)
2	-	2	-	2	0.4% (1)
3	1.1% (3)	3	1.1% (3)	3	1.8% (5)
4	1.1% (3)	4	1.4% (4)	4	3.6% (10)
5	1.8% (5)	5	2.5% (7)	5	4.0% (11)
6	3.2% (9)	6	1.4% (4)	6	3.2% (9)
7	3.6% (10)	7	4.3% (7)	7	4.7% (13)
8	2.9% (8)	8	5.1% (14)	8	5.4% (15)
9	5.1% (14)	9	7.2% (20)	9	6.5% (18)
10	2.9% (8)	10	6.9% (19)	10	5.1% (14)
11	5.1% (14)	11	2.5% (7)	11	1.8% (5)
12	1.4% (4)	12	4.3% (12)	12	4.0% (11)
13	1.8% (5)	13	1.4% (4)	13	2.5% (7)
14	1.1% (3)	14	4.0% (11)	14	4.0% (11)
15	4.3% (12)	15	5.1% (14)	15	4.0% (11)
16	1.8% (5)	16	1.4% (4)	16	1.1% (3)
17	2.2% (6)	17	1.8% (5)	17	1.1% (3)
18	1.4% (4)	18	1.4% (4)	18	0.7% (2)
19	0.7% (2)	19	1.8% (5)	19	1.1% (3)
20	4.0% (11)	20	4.7% (13)	20	2.9% (8)
21	2.5% (7)	21	1.1% (3)	21	1.1% (3)
22	1.8% (5)	22	1.8% (5)	22	1.4% (4)
23	0.4% (1)	23	0.4% (1)	23	0.4% (1)
24	1.1% (3)	24	1.8% (5)	24	1.8% (5)
25	-	25	1.4% (4)	25	1.4% (4)
26	1.1% (3)	26	1.1% (3)	26	0.7% (2)
28	0.7% (2)	28	0.4% (1)	30	0.7% (2)
30	0.4% (1)	30	1.4% (4)	32	0.7% (2)
44	0.4% (1)	32	1.1% (3)	33	0.4% (1)
45	0.7% (2)	33	0.7% (2)	37	0.4% (1)
48	0.4% (1)	35	0.4% (1)	40	0.4% (1)
49	0.4% (1)	37	0.4% (1)	45	1.1% (3)
50	1.4% (4)	39	0.4% (1)	80	0.4% (1)
52	0.4% (1)	40	0.4% (1)	95	0.7% (2)
54	0.4% (1)	45	1.1% (3)		
55	0.4% (1)	60	0.4% (1)		

60	0.7% (2)		80	0.4% (1)		
61	0.4% (1)		95	0.7% (2)		
65	0.4% (1)					
70	1.4% (4)					
76	0.4% (1)					
77	0.4% (1)					
80	1.4% (4)					
82	0.4% (1)					
86	0.4% (1)					
90	0.4% (1)					
93	0.4% (1)					
98	0.4% (1)					
100	1.1% (3)					
104	0.4% (1)					
120	1.1% (3)					
160	0.4% (1)					
200	1.1% (3)					

Appendix 18: Additional reasons for attending the head teacher and SENCO seminars

Other reasons
We have been told that TAs will become 'a rarity in the classroom' and that teachers will need to be very creative in their deployment.
To see how this work links with the L4 and the L3 TA training in Somerset
Providing excellent learning opportunities for all children to make progress
Suggested by head teacher
I am delivering Training on Deployment of TAs
Be able to effectively use TAs across the range of needs of the children
Aware of Ofsted focus on effectiveness of TAs
Concerned about what research tells us about the effectiveness of TAs
Had read the research and wanted to know more about it.
Help to disseminate best practice.
I run the Somerset National Award for SEN coordination and like to keep up to date with all new research
Raise standards
This benefits the children - the staff and the school
To support class teachers to improve the effective use of TAs
We support many children's TAs across Wigan and wish to improve our impact
.

Appendix 19: Additional comments from the head teacher and SENCO post seminar questionnaire in relation to the effectiveness of TAs

Comments
Again depends on the individual
As a school we need to invest more time/ money into training in order for TAs to be effective.
Could be more effective
Emotional support is essential in our school
Emotional support very effective
First Aid - Effective as teacher is left to teach
I need to audit!
I need to look more closely to find out.
I think as a school we are beginning to use a cycle to improve development of TAs - CPD for specific interventions so we can audit what/who is actually effective
Just started the SENCO role, so too early to say. Monitoring of TA input to start soon.
Need to improve teacher/TA communication re what pupils are learning in interventions
Personnel
Progress of children with SEN would indicate effective practice (across school)
Refer to previous comment
Supervision - could be more effective
Varies depending on TA, some excellent, some need more training
Want to observe. Research own school effectiveness
We have a wide range of TA expertise
We have targeted work completed outside the classroom and now need to find ways to improve the quality of provision within the classroom - this course has given me a lot to think about!
We need to review which are the most effective roles of the TA in our school and how to improve or stop others.

Appendix 20: Additional comments from the head teacher and SENCO post seminar questionnaire in relation to areas for development

Comment
All teachers and TAs have a good working relationships and the TAs understand what they are required to do.
Always room to improve
Experience of staff effects this (i.e. <i>Teachers understanding of effective methods of utilising TAs to support/work with pupils with SEN</i>)
Framework for training
just all needs to be improved
Listening today I feel we are doing reasonably but there is always room to improve
Many inexperienced teachers has impacted on consistency
Need to formalise procedures/communication
we are always looking to enhance our practice to the benefit of our children
What an inclusive classroom is. School improvement role/implications
What makes an 'effective' TA - a consistent policy.
Whilst I think what we do is 'good' there is lots of room for improvement

Appendix 21: Type of school in which teachers attending the INSET were employed

Type of School	% (N)
Primary School	38.2% (302)
Primary Academy	18.4% (145)
Primary & Secondary ('all through') Academy	0.5% (4)
Secondary wide ability school	6.9% (54)
Secondary Academy	16.0% (126)
Secondary Free School	0.3% (2)
Independent	2.7% (21)
Special	3.4% (27)
Other	
Coach/Advisor	0.1% (1)
First School	0.1% (1)
First school up to year 4	0.1% (1)
infant	0.1% (1)
Infant	0.1% (1)
Infant School	0.1% (1)
junior	0.1% (1)
Junior Academy	0.6% (5)
Junior School	0.9% (7)
Junior School Academy	0.1% (1)
Learning support service	0.1% (1)
Medical Pupil Referral Unit	0.1% (1)
Middle Academy	0.4% (3)
Middle School	0.9% (7)
Sixth Form College	0.1% (1)

Appendix 22: Characteristics of the schools in which teachers attending the INSET were employed

No. of pupils	% (N)
Less than 150	9.3% (73)
151-300	29.7% (234)
301-500	25.0 (197)
501-1000	14.1% (111)
1001-2000	10.8% (85)
2000+	0.1% (1)

Proportion of pupils on SEN register*	% (N)
0	0.1% (1)
1-10%	9.9% (78)
11-20%	25.3% (199)
21-30%	15.0% (120)
31-40%	5.5% (43)
41-50%	0.4% (3)
51-60%	0.4% (3)
61-70%	-
71-80%	1.6% (13)
81-90%	-
91-99%	-
100%	2.8% (22)

*Note although the question asked respondents to provide a proportion some indicated exact figures, whilst for others there answer did not make it clear if they were quoting exact figures or proportions.

Number of Teacher and TAs employed at the schools of attending teachers

Number of Teachers	% (N)	No. of TAs	% (N)
1-10	24.2% (191)	1-10	32.5% (256)
11-20	26.8% (211)	11-20	31.7 % (250)
21-30	8.5% (67)	21-30	8.8% (69)
31-40	0.6 % (5)	31-40	18 (2.3%)
41-50	3.6% (29)	41-50	0.9% (7)
51-60	3.6% (29)	51-60	-
61-70	1.1% (9)	61-70	-
71-80	8.1% (64)	71-80	-
81-90	0.7% (6)	81-90	-
91-100	0.6% (5)	91-100	-
101+	0.4% (3)	101+	-

Appendix 23: Teachers roles identified in pre INSET questionnaire

Respondents roles (teacher seminar pre questionnaire)*	% (N)
Classroom teacher	56.6% (446)
SEN support teacher	0.3% (2)
SENCO	4.3%(34)
Inclusion leader/manager	1.0% (8)
Head of Department/subject coordinator	10.0% (79)
Head of Year	1.1% (9)
Head of Key Stage/Key Stage manager	2.4% (19)
Assistant head teacher	2.5% (20)
Deputy head teacher	2.5% (20)
Head teacher/Principal	1.9% (15)
Other	
Acting Deputy Head	0.1% (1)
Advisor to the Learning Support Department. (P/T)	0.1% (1)
Apprentice TA	0.1% (1)
Assistant 3	0.1% (1)
Assistant SENco	0.1% (1)
Coach/Advisor	0.1% (1)
Cover supervisor	0.3% (2)
French teacher and PPA cover teacher	0.1% (1)
Head of specialist language provision	0.1% (1)
HLTA	0.9% (7)
HLTA Team Leader	0.3% (2)
ITT student	0.1% (1)
ITT trainer	0.1% (1)
Learning mentor pupil premium	0.1% (1)
Literacy Co	0.1% (1)
Literacy coordinator	0.1% (1)
LSA	0.3% (2)
Music teacher	0.1% (1)
Nursery TA	0.1% (1)
OSSO	0.1% (1)
PGCE student	0.4% (3)
SEND Mentor	0.1% (1)
senior teacher	0.3% (2)
SMT	0.1% (1)
Specialist reading teacher	0.1% (1)
Student - PGCE	0.1% (1)
student teacher	1.8% (14)
T & L coach	0.1% (1)
TA coordinator SEN	0.1% (1)
Teacher with S&L Difficulties	0.1% (1)
Teaching Assistant	1.0% (8)
Trainee teacher	5.1% (40)

*Note that the question allowed respondents to indicate where they held multiple roles

Appendix 24: Teachers suggested changes in relation to the deployment of TAs who work with/support children with SEN

- Use of questions grids.
- Inform teachers of targets students are working towards.
- Share how TAs are deployed.
- A more systematic and consistent approach to my management.
- Aim to spend/ find time to explain context of forthcoming lesson. set up more carousel activities so that more children receive help from TA/ class teacher.
- Allow more time to talk to TAs.
- Any changes to be made will depend on TA/teacher feedback to ensure TAs are used in the best way to enhance learning and development in our school and support school improvement aims.
- It is up to the teacher to prepare and support their TA so they are aware of their role and expectations.
- Ask head for less out of class intervention.
- Be more assertive/instructive in how I use them.
- Change ability of pupils who work with LSAs.
- Change how questioning is used.
- Clarity of expectations of children in class & communication RE interventions and children's progress.
- More teacher contact time.
- Could give a general plan of my lessons to TAs. Like idea of TAs writing keywords and using rotating groups so SEN get peer & teacher time. Will feedback to science department.
- Department LSAs seem the way forward!
- Develop communication and prepare more!
- Develop greater definition (agree) between Dept/LSAs about the logistics of what 'rotating and roving' means in terms of supporting effective learning in class.
- Discuss more (TA out for breakfast club) in time or email.
- Discussion with head teacher and other teachers. Planning meetings with TAs (once a week). Written feedback from TAs.
- Discussions with SLT and time to reflect.
- Empower TAs. As important as teachers when used effectively, much more effective in special needs school (previous job).
- Ensure time available to talk to TAs before and after lessons.
- Ensuring my TAs still provide challenge for students with SEN. This is not dependent if I manage to see my TA before the lesson.
- Ensuring that TAs do not feed children answers and encourage independence. Ask them to give feedback.
- Explore organising LSAs to be attended and deployed by departments rather than centrally.
- Feedback and planning time/communication.
- Firstly, we need to advise them not so spoon feed the answers to their groups, just so they get the work done. Ask them to question/ challenge pupils as a teacher would.
- Get the children to work more independently my rotating my TA.

- Give answers/lesson objectives every lesson if possible. Use TA with higher ability more.
- Give TAs MTP plans. Use a form of stickers for TA to comment on work done under their supervision.
- Giving them info on my class hourly objectives. Involving TAs with teaching. Group work with TA support.
- Going to try and use rotating and roving- yet I think it would have been more relevant to have actual practical ideas- not just a few ideas in the form of case studies.
- Have a chat with TA about role and how we can work together. Share planning when possible. Work with SEN more myself.
- I agree with all that was said in the training however I feel I need the time to discuss SOWs and targets with the TA which I feel I currently do not yet.
- I already do ensure SEN get a mix of T and TA input. Also need to ensure time for feedback although I do always get TAs to do labels for each child when working with written feedback and I do always ask how the group got on after each lesson.
- I am going to make a conscious effort of focussing on SEN groups/ individuals myself rather than rely on the TA.
- I am going to start TA note books where all messages are written.
- I am in Early years so am lucky to have full time TA. Will ask her thoughts on how she feels she is best used.
- I currently feel the TAs are used effectively. Ideally I would like more time pre/post lessons for discussion, but due to budget limitations know this is unlikely to happen.
- I had some in school training from my SENCO last month. As a result of this I developed a prompt sheet to hand to LSAs each lesson. It is a printed A4 sheet that is laminated. It is intended to only take a minute to fill out. Sections include learning objectives, key questions to ask to develop learning, students to focus on and feedback section on the back. It can be wiped down and re-used after each lesson.
- I intend on involving the TA with planning.
- I intend to be more directive. I wasn't sure what I was allowed to ask them to do, so I didn't expect them to do very much - this will change!
- I intend to improve methods of communication with TAs via general interventions. (Mostly away from the Velcro model to more independent learning) and improving feedback from interventions. and to challenge my schools (lack of) policy in deploying TAs.
- I intend to schedule meetings with TAs and ensure that they are aware of all LOs in all lessons.
- I intend to trial some of the TA work examples provided, to see what works best to benefit the children e.g. ask TAs to take a step back and scaffold and support rather than lead, use of TA ideas during whole class teaching. I will also introduce the four Bs (brain, board, buddy, boss).
- I need to request a time for prep and planning and feedback so everyone knows the expectations (just like the children!) I will try creating a form my TAs can use to record progress/feedback.

- I plan to continue a series of INSET training to teachers on effective deployment which our school began in 2011 and are re-running for new staff this year. I intend to do more work with teachers about QFT and differentiation for SEN.
- I will spend more time in discussions with my science technicians in case they come in.
- I work with SEN pupils initially after whole class delivery (explaining/reinforcing/clarifying etc.) while LSA 'roves'.
- I would like to have my TAs working less with SEN pupils and have more opportunities to work with other groups! Individual children in class.
- Share learning objectives (3 levels) with TA during active starts. Suggest levels of pupils for LSAs to work with to give them an idea of what work can/should look like.
- Improve communication with LSAs with regards the expectations of work. Get LSAs to move away from pupils to increase independence.
- Improve time, feedback, training and use of open questions.
- In order to make any changes the support of the SLT is needed.
- In Y1 I feel as most things are done fairly well. However, as TA support is decreased further up the school it becomes harder.
- Include TAs in planning. discuss intervention with TA and teacher.
- I intend to try to find time to specifically train LSAs to use the practical equipment, i.e. paint/rendering/sewing machines, to enable them to be more effective in the Art/textiles area.
- Intention to address TAs giving children answers. Want to look at how TAs can engage children with high-level thinking, with questioning. Also wish to stop TAs working 1-1 as much as they currently do.
- It is essential that the TAs help the SEN pupils to become more independent by gradually withdrawing support and encouraging them to work with other pupils. SEN pupils can become very isolated because of the presence of an adult with them all the time.
- It is the school that needs to make changes. LSAs need to be attached to specific groups and subjects, not an hour here and there. We all need for more PPA in order to allow planning and feedback.
- It will be a small scale action research project for the SENCO award focussing on deployment and preparedness.
- It would be most helpful to have dedicated TAs to work with specific departments in order to forge closer working relationships and understand the needs of the individual SEN students who are in need of support within lessons.
- Just more aware now what TA needs to be kept informed.
- Key thing to move is that when talking to a student it doesn't rely on student dependence and improves independence.
- Less focus on SEN only
- Lesson study project - TAs and teachers observe learning and discuss outcomes. Use of prompts on table to support TA questioning. TAs to annotate plans. TAs to make notes about pupils during intro, etc.

- Looking at allocating TAs to departments to ensure more consistent support to make deployment of support more easily managed and therefore more effective.
- Making sure that my TA is not always working with SEN group. Making time during assembly to talk to each other. Findings out more about the interventions that are taking place and what are the outcomes.
- More careful use of timetabling for meeting with TAs. Ensuring they are more prepared.
- More dialogue. Consider what best way to utilise TA more effectively.
- More group work using the TA as a facilitator in and out of the classroom.
- More training & planning time for TAs. Work shadowing, training for teachers on how to use TAs effectively.
- More written communication with regards assessment.
- Need some time designated pre and post lesson. Need to assume less about TA knowledge and provide a more scaffolded preparation proformas. Not just planning. Help with vocab and resources (already do, but could do better). Need to be clearer on objective and expectation.
- Need to do INSET for all staff who could benefit from this. Possibility of setting up a 'working group'.
- Our SENCO recently delivered similar training for a staff meeting so some of the changes I have already implemented, i.e. focusing the TA with higher ability and me with LA/SEN but there is much more we can develop but I imagine will be difficult to implement, i.e. time for preparing and feedback.
- Plan to trial working with TA in yr10 group. Will discuss working with all groups - allowing SEN the opportunity to interact more with peers and independent learning.
- Planning received in plenty of time. Playing to the TA's strengths. Change groupings continually.
- Planning time and preparedness.
- Provide a specific feedback time. Look into this as a requirement for all. Look in 'questioning' as an LSA CPD issue. Focus on use of LSA in lesson observations.
- Provide actual higher order questions for TA to use in specific lessons. Ask TA to use a quality first approach, i.e. feedback point of learning for all.
- Provide more time to plan and give feedback.
- Provide questions/activities for LSAs to use.
- Questioning techniques, communication between TAs/Teachers.
- Short term fixes such as you can only support children by asking questions.
- Strategically change to allow teachers time to discuss with TAs for planning and feedback.
- Support less, to develop independence.
- Work more with children who need extra input who are LA on wave 2.
- TA and teacher to share support of SEN in the classroom.
- TA scribing.
- TA to work less with individual children and more with a variety of children and more often.
- TAs are not always provided for the pupils who need it. TAs assigned to each department would work well. Could choose who needed the support..

- TAs moved into department and not centrally employed.
- TAs to give children more thinking time. TAs not to sit and listen- be busy.
- The changes I will make are trying to include SEN more in the classroom.
- The main factors I'd like to improve are communication. With deployment of TAs - the subject requires one to one with machine use & H&S so cannot change. TA led- would need training.
- They work specifically with those children so they're OK this year.
- Thinking about it! Still not sure - need more time to reflect.
- This is a definite focus across campus and strongly in the primary of the campus. Staff audited and begun carousel of INSET training for support staff with utilising their skills to train each other on PDI INSET das. Refocus use of support staff- currently they are embracing the opportunity to upskill and be more empowered.
- This is something we are in the process of doing - we need to think about the 'how' more to make effective change.
- This needs to be a key part of ITT and NQT training so that teaching and learning is maximised for all. I will review the ITT and NQT training as a result of today's input.
- Time to plan and provide support to TA.
- Timetable needs changing so there is time for teacher and TA to communicate prior/after lesson.
- Timetabling for teacher/ TA to meet and plan/evaluate. Target boards to focus ta delivery. Question/prompt cards.
- To ensure all children have the same amount of time with TA and teacher. Planning more available for TAs. Possible meeting time (Assemblies). Higher level question development.
- To stop TA positioning herself with low achievers at the beginning of the lesson. This should promote more active learning and listening independently.
- Training and development of Teachers and LSAs.
- Try to give the TA an overview of maths and English lessons at the start of each week.
- Use TAs more widely in the classroom, not just with one individual but with small groups of SEN students.
- Make sure LSAs are not doing too much for students - encourage more questioning from LSA to students.
- We already discussed allocating TAs mainly to department. We try to do this at the beginning of the school year but if TAs leave then new members fill their timetable and it may not be in their subject area.
- We hope to provide more time for planning and feedback for TAs/teacher partnerships.
- We need to discuss how SEN pupils work with other peers in the class to see what they are gaining from experiences with other pupils.
- We will speak to our head teacher about looking at a school policy for TAs.
- Consider what changes we can make for the new academic year.
- Whole discussion about the deployment of TAs needed.
- Will try roaming and roving.
- Empowering LSAs to be TAs.
- Work with G&T.

- Would like to but need to think about it, and approach my superiors about some of the issues presented today, to promote positive changes.
- Yes, I would like as much information of the effectiveness of subject specific LSAs and how best to use them and will audit their deployment. Staff training/ awareness.
- Slide show very depressing. Took more than a week to get over it
- Thank you for the presentation. Very thought provoking.

Appendix 25: Case Study A: Larger than average primary school, London

Context

The school is situated in the London Borough of Camden and has approximately 450 pupils on roll. Pupils are from a wide variety of minority ethnic backgrounds with no dominant group. A large proportion speak English as an additional language, although relatively few are at the early stages of learning English. Staff report that due to its reputation as a highly inclusive school it has attracted a higher than average number of pupils with SEN. The deputy head and SENCO attended the head teacher and SENCO seminar but teaching staff did not receive any training from the Teaching School.

Impact of project: How behaviour/practice has changed as a result of the project

The deputy head felt that the work undertaken by the school before and subsequent to attendance at the head teacher and SENCO seminar had improved the quality of questioning (staff to pupils) and encouraged their learning/learning conversations. It was also felt that the quality of the communication between teachers and TAs had improved. Children were seen in a more holistic way, leading to a more personalised and child-centred approach. One of the TAs interviewed suggested, *'It's a much more holistic picture of the child, so it's more personalised'*. Tracking systems had also improved allowing more effective identification of where poor progress occurs in different year groups. The deputy head offered an example,

'There is one clear example of a child in year two who made very poor progress last academic year. So one sub-level of progress in each area and this year she has made three sub-levels of progress in reading, writing and maths.'

Structurally the school has now adopted a system where Learning Support Assistants (LSA) are designated as Inclusion (ILSA) or SEN, as such the school has moved away from the designation of 'Teaching Assistant'. This was a managerial decision of the new deputy head prior to the training, but the training reinforced the decision. Engagement with the Inspired Educators project has also led to better planning in the use of TAs/LSAs. In planning meetings staff are identified with expertise and/or their expertise is developed. The deputy head spoke of *'trying to develop each ILSA into an area of specialism'* to work across a year group or groups of children and described how *'This year the ILSAs have worked one ILSA per year group'*. Formerly support staff had been allocated to work with individual children or specific classes.

The TAs also reported a number of positive impacts. They felt that they now carried out interventions and other work in a more personalised way. They also considered that they had greater awareness of how to be more effective in the class through, for example, the questions used and knowledge of the personalised targets set for children. The school-led training related to specific interventions and the restructuring of additional adult support that had followed on from the Heads and SENCOs seminar had helped in 'bridging the gap' in pupil learning (i.e. in terms of expected progress). Training support staff about specific needs and the provision of more guidance by the school had also been beneficial.

The TAs considered that they now had more expertise and could see what the vision was. They noted that, *'The deputy head has got a vision for moving inclusion forward and SEN forward'*. There was a feeling that the TA role was more clearly defined and that generally practice had improved now that they were clear about what was expected of them.

The TAs had been trained to develop more specialist intervention, for example, precision teaching and Toe by Toe had been brought in this year. Teachers interviewed felt the work of support staff was now far more targeted. For example, some specialised in speech and language support. The aim was always to ensure pupils progressed. They also noted that since the school had split them into SEN and Inclusion support, the support staff were keen to take on the role of LSA, as it allows for individuals to engage in more specific personal and career development, in addition to their more tailored duties and responsibilities.

It was felt that the developments in practice had improved the quality of questioning (staff to pupils) to encourage their learning/learning conversations. The quality of the communication between teachers and TAs had improved as well as tracking (i.e. identifying where poor progress occurs in different year).

It was reported that the governors had spoken with six children with complex needs. The deputy head said that they had been very impressed by the children they had met, reporting that they were generally positive and enthusiastic, talking about the work they do with various different adults. There was evidence of some change in staff attitudes. The TAs were more positive in interactions and felt they could see the difference the developments in practice were making. The deputy head reported that '*The ILSAs have changed their attitudes to become more positive on the impact of interventions like 'precision teach' and the impact of effective questioning because they are seeing the difference it's making to learners*'. The deputy head and teachers felt there had been a change of mindset alongside an improvement in the quality of support. It was felt that support staff were not just engaging in an activity for its own sake, but understood the benefits to the children and were able to see real progress being made. They now considered themselves as a part of the team with their own specialist knowledge and skills, drawn on to make a real contribution.

Teachers reportedly now think more about their roles and those of support staff, and have been encouraged to be more reflective. TAs now better understand the impact they have on children, they have ownership over their progress and feel appreciated. The teachers felt that the Senior Leadership Team had also changed their attitudes in where and how TAs should be used. TAs are no longer attached to classes or specific children, they are seen as a flexible resource available across the school or key stage.

The barriers to engagement with the project identified related to the mobility of children. Pupils come and go into the area and school frequently, thus staff are also transient. For example, the school may get agency staff for specific needs (e.g. language) but when the children leave so do they. This can make it difficult to maintain a universal and consistent approach. Being a relatively large school, it is also hard to meet with all the staff.

The TAs said they can talk to teachers, but perceived there still to be a hierarchy, between teachers and ILSAs and SEN support and then TAs. This has been one drawback of the role of ILSAs. As noted earlier the school has decided to redesignate TAs as LSAs/ILSAs, effectively establishing this as a higher level, more specialised post.

Despite the improvements made it was felt there was still a need for more cohesiveness. It was also felt that the approach to provision still did not make use of people's specialisms and strengths as much as it could. Communication was still a barrier, with a feeling that LSA/TAs were not always brought into the loop. For example, support staff were not part of the pupil progress meetings at the moment but would like to be. Communication across the school was seen as an area that needed on going attention. In the context of a relatively large school there was a need to look at the forums that needed to be in place to facilitate this.

The teachers felt it would have been beneficial if they had direct access to the Inspired Educators training rather than just the SENCO and the deputy head as this would have enabled them to understand the 'big picture'.

It was also suggested that more training could be made available. A need was identified for time to be set aside to train TAs, allowing them to shadow teachers and for practice to be modelled. It was important that this should be well planned and have a clear purpose rather than on an ad hoc basis with TAs simply dropping into classes when opportunities presented.

Reflecting some of the school's difficulties in maintaining a universal and consistent approach, it was suggested that budgets needed to be available to train supply and agency staff so that they were aware of what was expected of them when working in the school.

Practical approaches/ best-practice resources

Prior to attendance at the head teacher and SENCO seminar by the deputy head and SENCO a briefing had already been provided for teaching staff on the national research that had implied that TAs were not being used cost effectively and were having minimal impact. In addition the school had appointed a new deputy head for inclusion. She, therefore, was the driving force in the restructuring of TAs work as well as encouraging engagement with the Inspired Educators project. Thus in many ways the information provided in the seminar was used by senior management to reinforce the strategy they had already adopted.

After attending the head teacher and SENCO seminar, the deputy head and SENCO again met with the teaching staff to discuss some of the proposals gleaned from it. The teachers interviewed reported they had received INSET led by Swiss Cottage, about how to lead staff in their own practice, how to manage TAs and how to improve communication. This reinforced work undertaken by the school in last two years to develop more effective use of support staff and change mindsets.

The school provided subsequent INSET for support staff. The issues raised during the initial head teacher and SENCO seminar were the main focus. Particular attention was drawn to the DISS reports and their concerns regarding the effective use of TAs. The second part of the INSET looked at the use of effective questioning when working with pupils. In addition the deputy head explained that two new interventions, Toe-by-Toe and precision teaching were introduced.

The Inspired Educators project had fulfilled a useful role in reinforcing the need for changes that were already part of the school plan to improve staff's use of questioning when working with children. The template supplied in the training and the accompanying book was used to structure these developments in how support staff use questioning in the classroom.

The factors which have contributed to successful engagement with the Inspired Educators project included creating new teams through the designation of LSAs as either Inclusion or SEN and the clear vision of SLT that was communicated to all staff.

The school has also used expertise from the local Educational Psychologist in relation to precision teaching.

Engagement with the Inspired Educators project was in the context of a school that staff considered had always had an inclusive ethos and reputation for this that meant that parents of pupils with SEN specifically tried to enrol their children.

The opportunity to visit other schools was felt to be important in order to gain an insight into how others were addressing the same issues as well as greater links with Swiss Cottage as the local Teaching School.

The deputy head highlighted the need for a staff development programme for support staff that led to accreditation. A foundation degree was discussed as one example that might fulfil this need.

Attitudinal and cultural change/ support for inclusive education goals more widely

The teachers said they now saw inclusion in terms of providing 'just enough support' to remove barriers and enable children to learn rather than doing it all for children. The provision was perceived to be more holistic now, concerned with the whole child. More people are involved and thus knowledge of the child's academic progress, specialist needs and interventions are more coordinated. It is more personalised; each child has their own IEP and they take ownership (e.g. 'I will improve by doing that...') As one TA put it, '*they own their own targets*'.

Teachers reported that engagement with the Inspired Educators project had helped them to consider how they managed support staff. They had become more proactive and assertive with them to ensure that they are engaged. The teachers and TAs interviewed felt they worked more effectively as a team, each with specialist knowledge and skills. There was recognition by the teachers that there were times when they needed to model practice for support staff.

The TAs felt more supported since the change to a structure where LSAs were designated as Inclusion or SEN and considered that the deputy head had a clear vision. This was also the perception of senior management. They reported that SEN LSAs seemed to be quietly positive and more willing to take advice. In contrast the Inclusion LSAs appeared to be more resistant to change, though it was suggested that this could be related to the individuals concerned rather than a structural issue.

Appendix 26: Case Study B: Small rural primary school, Yeovil

Context

The school is situated in a village just outside of Yeovil, Somerset. The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A below average, but increasing, proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding for pupils including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is about average. A below average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational need. The school is popular and the number of pupils entering the school is increasing with a significant number of these being admitted into Key Stage 2.

Impact of project: How behaviour/practice has changed as a result of the project

The head teacher and SENCO had attended the seminar held at Fiveways school and felt that the training was effective and reinforced key messages about the importance of TAs and how they should be used. It had highlighted some of the patterns the school had fallen into. The head teacher recalled some of the questions attendance at the seminar had raised:

'If you have TAs, do children become reliant on them, how do you encourage independence? There was an element of that going on the course'

'The tendency to always use TAs for the group of children who have SEN, why isn't the teacher working with them? The TA working with the rest of the class or the TA working with the more able children?... [the training] has promoted those sorts of questions to be fair'

However in hindsight the head felt the seminar should have been a whole day, with time set aside to discuss and develop the action plan. A similar comment was made by the school SENCO, who would have also liked more time to consider the implications and develop practical actions.

The teachers and TAs did not attend and again in hindsight wished they had. The head teacher and the SENCO, also suggested that in future any such training should include the teachers and TAs.

The head teacher noted that although a specific action plan was not drawn up, actions were incorporated into the School Development Plan. The messages derived from the training had been in accord with their most recent Ofsted inspection, which had emphasised the need for pupils to be better independent learners. As a school they had also noted that liaison between teachers and TAs was an issue.

The head teacher and the SENCO felt the training had reinforced, and provided some suggestions in relation to, concerns that they were already aware of. However, it also helped to reassure them where they had effective practice.

Practical approaches/best-practice resources

The head teacher did have a staff meeting after attending the seminar to emphasise to the teachers their responsibilities in terms of working with TAs. This meeting was also used to explore the implications of the research that had been presented at the seminar, which questioned the effectiveness of the use of TAs in some contexts and the need for a more strategic approach.

This led to two significant changes; TAs now shadow teachers, in order to learn more about their specific strategies and goals for individual pupils as well as their teaching techniques. In addition TAs are now given preparation time to develop targeted materials, reflect on their own learning and to communicate with teachers. It was acknowledged this did occur before the training; however it was based on good will. The teachers are not given any extra time to communicate with TAs and as such when interviewed they felt it was somewhat of a barrier to improving practice and provision for pupils.

Commenting on how she had gone about changing practice, the SENCO said *'I looked at what each TA needed and tried to give them what I thought is a balance of what they need, what is fair and what I am able to give'*. This had led to her changing the SEN policy, adding in more detail about the roles of TA, about the pupil profiles and the expectations of staff to have structured learning conversations with each other about each child's progress and the use of TAs. The SENCO stated they were not using IEPs, but targeting. She described an approach adopted:

'Anyone on the SEN register goes through a questionnaire about what they think is good about themselves and what we think is lovely about them and then, in child – speak, what the problem is and what will make a difference. This comes from them and we read it back through with them so we make sure we have it right for them. ... the bit at the bottom is what the people in class can do to support them.'

For the SENCO the information on the course formed part of a wider rationale for change:

'The course was part of the drip, drip, drip, I'm going to do this change'

The teaching assistants also noted the impact of having additional planning and liaison time that had now been provided. They felt that there was better communication between them and teachers, both face to face and via email and that they had better knowledge of individual pupils.

Another development noted by the head teacher and SENCO was a timetabling change. Children are now not taken out of class for interventions until the afternoon. In this way, not only do children who need it have more time to engage with specialist interventions, but their learning and social development is not interrupted as much since they can stay in the class with their peers and teacher through the morning.

This change was supported by one of the teachers interviewed who noted prior to the project that it *'felt that perhaps there was just too much one to one and too much being taken out of the classroom'*. The teacher used one child as an example:

'There is a particular child in my class who is severely dyslexic and does not have a great vocabulary himself and I felt that he was missing out on a lot of those things in

the class, like conversation skills and social skills and turn taking. Since then [a conversation with the SENCO post seminar] he's involved a lot more in our literacy lesson and I think from that we've seen greater progress. [The TA] who comes in the class is there to support him, but is not on him all the time, so he learns greater independence'.

The TAs felt that everyone is clear what they are expected to do with each child. There is a written plan, TAs can talk to teacher just before and just after a lesson/intervention to better understand what they are required to do and review progress afterwards. This further aids on-going planning and preparation.

When asked to consider the impact of these changes, the head teacher did review progress data and noted that children on the SEN register did appear to have made significantly better progress this year than in previous years and although this could not be solely attributed to the changes made, he felt the evidence did appear compelling.

The SENCO was very receptive to change and was clearly driven to improve the outcomes for the children. She noted that the SEN policy is under review, but will include giving TAs more time where possible in the future.

As mentioned the teachers did express concern over their lack of time to fully engage with TAs, however they did note a generally positive working relationship. They clearly respected the expertise of their particular TAs, noting that in their school there are SEN TAs used for specific children.

When asked if the focus on the use of TAs resulting from the school's engagement with the Inspired Educators project had changed their classroom practice, they indicated that it had:

'I have made it more of a priority in my own teaching practice this year definitely. How I use TAs for the benefit of the children' (T)

'I think it has for me to an extent, because I have <name of TA> now in with a child, rather than taking him out. So I know he is always on my mind when planning, whereas it used to be "well, I don't think he's going to be in the lesson", now I know he's going to be there, so I know I am going to need really specific key questions or targets that he needs'

Attitudinal and cultural change/ support for inclusive education goals more widely

The head teacher did express some concern that children become reliant on TAs and that there was a tendency to use TAs more for children with SEN:

'If Ofsted are saying to us there is not enough independence in the classroom, then how do you use those TAs to foster independence?'

He also felt there was a need to improve performance management. Generally he felt in the school people were accepting of change. Those who were not had already left the school before the training and thus the ethos of the school was generally very positive and receptive. But he did note a culture shift:

'The days of 'I need a TA, I've got a child with SEN' (have gone). Now it's turned round the other way. In pupil progress meetings I'm saying to the teacher that a child hasn't moved, you've got a TA in there for numeracy and so and so for literacy, why is that, explain that to me? I think there has been a culture shift; if you've got one, you've jolly well got to use them well, for progress.'

In the interview the TAs initially said there was not a great deal of evidence of change this year. However, when probed they qualified this by saying over the time they had worked there (7 years for one), the school had always been based around individualised teaching. They also felt the school is 'driven' from the head teacher down, in terms of inclusion and valuing the role of all staff. One TA commented,

'I would rather do things where I feel valued and I see the benefit for the children'

The SENCO noted that, although the attitudes have always been good, the changes this year do seem to have made them happier and reduced stress levels.

The teachers were positive about the changes. For them the main priority was their own teaching practice and how to use TAs more effectively. They noted that it is better to have children in the class and to use specific questions for them, than have them taken out. Thus keeping them during the morning and having TAs in the class with a more targeted approach was a definite improvement.

The teachers noted that the school has recognised the need for high quality TAs and to invest in their CPD. Indeed one of the teachers was a former TA and so both she and the senior management team felt this was a good example of the career progression available to TAs in the school. One teacher commented

'I think they do feel, and we feel, they are another part of the team and, yes, there is someone who is leading it, but they are an essential part of it and without them we could not do what we do'

Some concerns were raised at all levels of the organisation. The head teacher suggested that money and time are the biggest barriers. There is also the difficulty in sharing information.

The school had invested in a consultant to feedback on the use of TAs. The consultant, like Ofsted and the Inspired Educators seminar, had noted that there should be a focus on independent learning. The head teacher was therefore reassured of his approach, but concerned about resourcing it.

The SENCO echoed these concerns, noting that time and money is still a barrier, not willingness or ability. Changes have been successful in this school because of the collegial attitude. The TAs are also very well qualified and experienced.

Much the same issue was raised by the TAs in relation to funding and resources, especially in terms of purchasing specific equipment for specific children. They also felt there is a lack of time to implement things.

Teachers still found it hard to have time to liaise with TAs and they felt that there is still too much one to one time and children being taken out of the class, although this has improved with the move to afternoon interventions. Describing the approach to liaison with TAs one teacher commented,

'There is time for TAs to prepare stuff for themselves, but we're still teaching. We take it upon ourselves; if I want to liaise with someone or send them my plans that's a choice I make, so I will mail my plans to a TA, or you either talk before school or after school or a lunchtime. There can be two, three separate different plans for different people, different parts of the week, numeracy, then literacy... it's massive, because the stuff's in your head, you know where you want to take the child but communicating that to some else?'

Another observed,

'Explaining what you want done to someone else takes twice as long as you just "oh I know what I want to do"'

Other barriers noted by teachers included a perceived lack of understating from government about children's need, attitudes of some parents and children often coming from backgrounds where there is a lack of a positive attitude toward education. The teachers also felt they lacked knowledge about things like medical care for children with complex needs.

To conclude the interviews the interviewees provided some suggestions to improve the Inspired Educators project. The head teacher felt that teachers should have attended training as well as himself and SENCO as this would have enabled the school to establish a steering group. The head teacher thought the seminar should have been a whole day. He also felt that it was more a briefing of ideas and approaches, rather than a practical training course.

The SENCO felt the information was a little general and dated, (i.e. research was 4 years old), and ideally it should also have been led by school based practitioners.

The teachers felt they needed training in terms of practical resources. They gave the example of needing practical guidance on strategies and approaches for children with dyslexia or autism, rather than theoretical perspectives on these needs. Again they talked of the need for time. They wanted time to learn and time to visit special schools, which could perhaps be achieved through more collaboration between different types of schools.

Appendix 27: Case Study C: Larger than average primary school, Bromley

Context

This larger than average primary school recently became an academy trust. In 2010, Ofsted judged it to be a good school with some excellent features. Although some students speak English as an additional language, most are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with SEN is slightly below average, although there are a number with statements. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school also included a managed Nursery. At the time of visit the school was undergoing some changes in relation to its senior leadership team. Representatives from the school attended the seminar at Swiss Cottage.

Impact of project: How behaviour/practice has changed as a result of the project

The deputy head felt the opportunity to hear about the research once again and to share best practice with other schools was a positive aspect of the head teacher and SENCO seminar. The SENCO also felt the information supplied was clear and concrete with clear messages to take immediately back to staff. The SENCO recalled,

'The line that stayed with me was 'that "it's the least qualified and articulate teaching used with the most vulnerable" and for me this is the message'

The SENCO felt that there was an opportunity to address this issue through performance management and job descriptions. However, the deputy head and SENCO did acknowledge there were still areas that needed addressing. The SENCO noted,

'I think the biggest weakness that came out of all of it, was the amount of communication between the teacher and the TA...the lack of planning'

Thus the seminar both reinforced their thinking and gave them the opportunity to further consider their approach. Illustrating this point, the deputy head stated,

'I do think it was perfect timing... I think the fact we went and it was facts. You know these are the facts and actually sharing hard facts with them, that actually said you know we have to think again'.

Practical approaches/ best-practice resources

Following the training the school had two staff meetings and asked someone from Swiss Cottage to present to the teaching staff. Colleagues from Swiss Cottage also provided the PowerPoint for the SENCO who was then able to share it with support staff.

The school had changed the title of TAs to Learning Support Assistants (LSA) prior to the project, but it was still a challenge to change some of the attitudes and working practices of TAs and teachers. The deputy head acknowledged that some teachers still felt that certain children were too difficult to teach and therefore should be handed over to a TA.

The training had emphasised that TAs should ask questions of pupils and avoid over helping or doing the child's work for them, because they wanted to please the teacher. It was felt that the project had been perfectly timed to facilitate that conversation with teachers and TAs. Issues had come to light when SATs results in maths were reviewed the previous year. It became clear that TAs were over-supporting the SEN group but they were not making progress.

The head teacher dispensed with the notion of an SEN group, since it seemed teachers were thinking these pupils were not their responsibility and forgetting they were part of their class. The focus now is on temporary interventions until pupils have improved and then they are back in class. This approach they felt was shown in classroom practice. The SENCO noted,

'I know one of the teachers who I asked to fill the form in, her TA - when I was doing performance management last week - said to me after she had seen the slides, "I've really noticed the difference in class, because my teacher now goes and works with the bottom set and gets me to sit with the middle or top set"'

The school has decided to invest in the development of their TAs, buying in an external trainer next year so they can complete their level 3 training, as well as special interventions and programmes.

The SENCO also felt that the TA should not be in their role permanently, they should be seeking further qualifications, for example beginning teacher training after a few years in post.

The SENCO noted they are actively looking at value for money in terms of the TAs and in addition whether the interventions are value for money.

The deputy head and SENCO stressed that now when they employ TAs, part of the selection criteria is asking if they fit in with the ethos of how they want to move the school forward. They noted that this year they actively decided not to employ TAs in their first round of interviews, where in the past, they had 'made do'. This was a clear change in practice and a positive step forward.

From the comments made, it appears that the TAs were very aware of the changes and had also noticed that the behaviour of the teachers they work with had changed. The TAs also felt they had more of a voice in what happens in the class and across the school. The school is more receptive to the innovative ideas of support staff. There was also more awareness amongst teachers of what an effective TA is. As an example of changes in TAs' understanding of their role the SENCO commented,

'I have just done performance management with the LSAs and with every one of them their first target is to help children within their class move towards independence'

The school decided to share the school improvement plan with all staff, so there is a shared understanding of the school's direction and their part within it. The deputy head noted that,

'Teachers are taking more of a responsibility for every child in their class, rather than thinking that it is someone else's job'

An unexpected outcome for the school was to look at the quality of their teachers, particularly in areas of the curriculum that the school had issues with in relation to pupils with SEN. The SENCO described this development:

'The other thing that has definitely come out of this, which we haven't mentioned, in maths in particular, is the quality of teaching, and that isn't a criticism, it is just looking at the confidence of the delivery of the lesson. I think that is what we have found is a very important thing to come out of this, what we are actually looking at. Who is

confident teaching and who is best able to teach the less able and it can't be the LSA who hasn't got the qualification'.

When asked about advice to other schools in relation to engagement with the Inspired Educators project, the SENCO said:

I found that course very revelatory, I think bringing that back to staff with that hard core evidence is almost an annual event. I almost think you need to say, "OK what are the statistics now across the borough? Has it changed? What is the impact of what you are doing for all of us?"

The deputy head also emphasised the need to provide further opportunities to network and share good practice. She suggested that it was then important within school to give the teachers and TAs planning time and facilitate meetings between them (and pay them for it), as a priority and to make sure it is put in the School Improvement Plan to give it real emphasis.

Attitudinal and cultural change/ support for inclusive education goals more widely

Prior to engagement with the project, the deputy head felt that the main issue with their TAs was that they were in her words 'glued to' certain children and saw their role as finishing off worksheets for them. TAs also felt this, feeling that if they did not undertake tasks like helping children finish worksheets, it reflected on them. Thus the deputy head felt this was a mindset that needed to change.

The SENCO also thought the Inspired Educators project was well timed with the new SEN code of practice emphasising good quality teaching and placing the focus on the class teacher. The SENCO did acknowledge that encouraging all teachers to take responsibility for the teaching and learning of children with SEN was an on-going process:

'It is giving, particularly to long-standing teachers, the confidence to work with that group'

The SENCO felt that not only did the attitude of TAs need to change, but also the teachers:

'The teacher often says that's the person you work with, sometime the LSA needs enough power to say to the teacher, I am not glued to them, I am meant to be supporting the group'

The school had used DVDs supplied by Ofsted, first of all that show a TA 'stuck' with a pupil, which they found familiar and then ones depicting practice where it was hard to tell who the teacher was. This helped to raise awareness of the school's vision for the role. In addition the deputy head and SENCO felt they should empower TAs to say to teachers that they should not be photocopying or undertaking reprographic jobs.

Some TAs were under the impression that they were LSAs, with the implication that they were employed just to work with particular groups. The school is working hard to change this mindset and develop an understanding that they are working with all groups under the direction of the teacher.

The deputy head did note that some teachers were still unsure what to do with their TAs. The senior management team now encourages teachers to have a class action plan to focus on children who are underachieving.

It was reported that some of the TAs need a better understanding of educational terminology such as the meaning of terms like sub-levels. Concern was also expressed that working regularly with lower ability groups had contributed to lowered expectations of what children could achieve. It was felt the TAs needed to realise that children can achieve and develop a greater understanding of expectations related to pupil progress.

In terms of challenges, the SENCO and deputy head both felt that because they had now raised their expectation of support staff, it was harder to find good quality applicants with the right qualifications and experience. They felt this could be offset with a standard TA training package/qualification.

They felt that a key outcome of engagement with the Inspired Educators project is that support staff now feel more valued as a professional and as a contributor to the school and its aims.

Appendix 28: Case Study D: Larger than average primary school, Barnsley

Context

At this larger-than-average-sized primary school almost all pupils are White British and live locally. The remaining small number of pupils originate from a variety of minority ethnic heritages. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are higher than national averages.

The school holds a number of awards including the Activemark and the Healthy Schools Silver Award. The school provides extended services such as study support, family learning courses and community access to their facilities. The school's inspection in March 2010 resulted in a notice to improve. An interim monitoring visit by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors in November 2010 judged the school was making satisfactory progress in tackling its main issues and in raising pupils' achievement. Since the last inspection there have been many staff changes, including the appointment of an executive headteacher for three days a week.

Impact of project: How behaviour/practice has changed as a result of the project

The school had implemented new procedures at the start of the year, coinciding with the promotion of one of the teachers to the position of SENCO. An initial INSET day in September had focused on the impact of TAs, which they had then worked on over the year. This had been underpinned by the key messages that the teacher retains accountability at all times for all pupils in their class and the deployment of TAs should not be all about interventions for pupils with SEN.

Whilst the head teacher and SENCO acknowledged that the Inspired Educators project had reinforced the ideas and developments which were already happening in the school, the TAs were not aware of the existence of the project, or that the school was taking part in it. The teachers interviewed had attended a 'follow-up' seminar at the school facilitated through the Inspired Educators project.

The SENCO had found the head teacher and SENCO seminar to be 'very statistical', and commented that it had been enlightening to see evidence of TAs' impact, and how much time they tended to spend outside of the classroom, and with low ability pupils. It had highlighted effective use of TAs with regards to interventions, which could make more of a contribution if conducted in the classroom. Whilst previously having sent the lower ability pupils out of the classroom to work with the TAs, the SENCO felt teachers in the school needed to be more aware of what was happening during these, and about their impact. The TAs were now spending more time in the classroom, and not always with the lower ability pupils. Any areas of developmental need had been identified by speaking to individual TAs, who were described as 'highly skilled'.

The head teacher felt that the seminar had reinforced things about which they were already aware, following on from research by the Sutton Trust. They had already identified a need, which 'tied in' with the Inspired Educators project. It had supported and helped them to work out how to improve the use of TAs to impact on pupils. It had helped to shape the school's practice, about how best to deploy TAs, particularly in the afternoons. The head teacher commented that the quality of support provided by TAs had improved throughout the year. The teachers had become involved in the project after the follow-up seminar, which had identified the issues more clearly for them. The TAs had not received direct input about the

project, but the SENCO had met with them at key points. Her role had been strategic, involving identifying who the pupils with SEN were, and organising the groupings, as well as logging IEPs. This was monitored and reviewed every six weeks, to account for how TAs were adding value in terms of pupils' outcomes. Whilst this had already been happening, the project had helped them to determine that this 'was the right direction to take'. Practice, rather than policy, had been changed since the start of the year. TAs were now carrying out interventions with pupils from different classes, so that pupils were not missing the lessons they enjoyed (such as PE). It was felt that some teachers had experienced difficulties at the start, in having to move away from thinking in terms of 'their TA', with TAs being used in a different way, and had needed to change their mind set.

Both of the teachers interviewed talked of the project having highlighted the need to use the TAs for pupils other than those with SEN. Whilst one had changed his practice as a result, for the other this had served to endorse her current practice. Since attending the seminar, however, it had strengthened her resolve to use a class book/journal to exchange written information with the TA about individual pupils. Although dialogue with the TAs had always been good, this was now felt to be based more on working together, and TAs were asked about tackling anything new beforehand – which they were said to appreciate. TAs now had more independence, and were involved in a wider range of activities, including working with the higher ability pupils on booster activities, which they were also said to enjoy. The teachers felt that, whilst TAs were still working with pupils on the SEN register, they had possibly 'upped it a level' and gave more consideration to 'how do I go from here to there?' As teachers, it had been important to have confidence in the TAs, and to trust them with the changes. Pupils now viewed TAs as 'ports of call' to help with learning as much as the teachers, and were 'on the same page'.

The TAs said that they were now involved in more work on IEPs and different interventions, as more of these had been introduced. They were 'doing a lot more now than before'. They were also now spending more time in the classroom in the mornings, and working with different year groups. Although the teachers were willing to explain to the TAs what they required of them, and this was felt to have improved over the past year ('we definitely have a clearer idea'), this still had to happen in the TAs' 'own time'. The biggest change identified by them was an increased workload. They were now also expected to mark the work produced by the groups of pupils they worked with. However, it was the 'one-to-one' time which was seen to have had an impact, as the TAs were required to conduct ongoing assessments of this.

'Getting parents on board' was seen to be an area of concern and a potential barrier to improving support and learning for pupils with SEN. The 'turbulent catchment area' was also mentioned in this regard. Lack of time to 'just talk to pupils' was identified by the TAs as an issue.

Practical approaches/ best-practice resources

The SENCO met regularly with staff not involved in the original training to keep them informed and to discuss key outcomes and next steps. Communication was said to be key, as was being a 'strong team'. With regard to the changes being implemented, the teachers also thought that 'everybody took it on board and went with it', even though the TAs had been excluded from the follow-on seminar. A wide range of training opportunities (for example, on Autism Spectrum Disorder, Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, restorative justice, attachment theory) had been provided.

The TAs were now spending all morning in the classroom, using the afternoons for booster activities and interventions, which was said to benefit the pupils with SEN. These sessions were set into a timetable which was organised by the SENCO, and appreciated by the TAs.

The school had invested heavily in CPD, with TAs increasingly receiving professional development opportunities over the past few years. Outside agencies had been utilised, such as the educational psychology service from a neighbouring Local Authority. The head teacher commented that other schools would similarly need to have the time and commitment to put training into place, and to capitalise on the opportunities of working with the Teaching Schools, in order to benefit from the project. She suggested that training the TAs as well as the teachers at the initial seminars would be desirable; also that Mencap could provide additional support and advice about working with parents. The teachers felt that practical ideas, in the form of videos or vignettes, would have helped to reinforce the key messages from the seminar.

Attitudinal and cultural change/ support for inclusive education goals more widely

The head teacher commented that the increase in interventions for reading, and social and emotional issues, meant that those pupils with BESD and literacy needs could now access more areas of the curriculum. However, she felt that the bureaucracy involved in responding to particular pupils' needs could impact upon other pupils, and that responses to these needed to be quicker. Having become an academy at the beginning of the year, funding was not perceived to be a barrier.

The teachers felt that there had been no real change in staff attitude, although the pupils with SEN now perhaps viewed lessons differently, as there were different expectations from all teachers and TAs.

The TAs felt that it was 'all about inclusion', and that pupils with SEN were now working more in the classroom rather than always being taken out – although sometimes this involved them sitting away from the rest of the class.

The head teacher and SENCO agreed that pupils had made better progress as a result of targeting pupils through more focused and specific interventions. This included pupils with SEN, although there was still a gap. The data was in the process of being analysed, but national expectations had been met. There were perceived to have been social and emotional benefits for the pupils as well. The strong pastoral team were using training to foster improvement, and also to cascade expertise to other members of staff.

The head teacher felt that there had been a change of attitude – rather than beliefs regarding support for pupils with SEN – in support staff; that 'when they've seen success, that's spurred them on'. The school had received good feedback from external agencies about the level of support for pupils. The key driver had been the SENCO, supported by the head teacher, and a number of the TAs.

One of the teachers had seen pupils making more progress through 'fast-tracking through the IEP', with teachers and TAs developing the targets together, and both working with those pupils.

Appendix 29: Case Study E: Larger than average primary school, Darlington

Context

This larger than average primary school has approximately 400 pupils on roll. It is housed in a relatively new building (approximately 10 years old) and was awarded academy status three years ago. A large majority of the pupils are White British, with the remainder representing a number of different ethnicities, a small proportion of which speak English as an additional language. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The school has received a number of awards including the healthy School Award, Activemark, Artsmark Gold and Basic Skills Award.

Impact of project: How behaviour/practice has changed as a result of the project

Prior to engagement with the Inspired Educators project, the school had been implementing changes for the past three years, focussing on the role of the TA, and the whole school learning community. The head teacher and SENCO reported that they had looked at their own TA policy, particularly at how TAs were being deployed. This had formed part of the School Improvement Plan. They had received some training with Creative Partnerships in this regard, and accessed research by Hattie, and felt they were 'better informed' than many schools. As their pupils with SEN were making good progress anyway, they had known their practice was effective. However, as they had been taking on more pupils with increasing needs, this had been drawing on TAs' time and energies.

Whilst the head teacher and SENCO acknowledged that the project had reinforced the ideas and developments which were already happening in the school, the TAs were not aware of the existence of the project, or that the school was taking part in it. The teachers interviewed had not accessed training from the Teaching School. However the SENCO had shared outcomes from the original seminar with them, and felt that they had taken it on board.

The head teacher said the Inspired Educators project had helped them to focus their thoughts when they produced the TA policy, although they were already 'going down the right lines'. They were 'moving away from the old model that the TA is there to be the 31st child in the classroom'. Rather than being essentially passive, they wanted TAs to be proactive, and to be developing their expertise within the setting, with the help of teachers. The head teacher described this as the class teacher sometimes having 'to be the general practitioner', and another person then being needed to develop the expertise to meet the needs of a particular child. Pupils were also being given support and scaffolding to become independent learners. Whilst the SENCO felt the seminar provided reassurance about the changes they had made, it had made her 'think around some principles', and provided tips about classroom organisation and getting TAs and teachers to work together effectively. Following the seminar, the SENCO said they had aimed to involve teachers increasingly in teaching pupils with SEN. Teachers now realised that pupils with SEN were *their* responsibility, rather than 'giving them to the TAs'. All teachers now had to provide a provision map for pupils, which had come directly from the seminar. Inclusive practices were being adopted to support pupils with SEN in the mainstream, including being integrated back into the class through use of peer support. Expectations of all parties – teachers, TAs, pupils – needed to be clear. The quality of support had been 'tightened', as teachers were seen to have the most education, knowledge and skills for pupils with SEN.

As they were approaching the next Ofsted inspection, with a high number of TAs in the school, they needed to make sure they were being used in the best possible way, supporting all pupils. They had therefore prioritised the up-skilling of TAs, and developed a specific policy for them – which previously had come under the umbrella of curriculum, learning and

teaching. This had looked at the three areas as identified at the seminar: deployment, preparedness, and professional development of TAs. Those requiring additional training (e.g. Makaton) to be able to support specific needs had been identified. Very few TAs now saw themselves as a 'spare pair of hands', and the idea that 'the child is the problem' had been reviewed.

The TAs said there had been a conscious decision to change their way of working with teachers, and that they were staying with them in the classroom more. Whereas previously they used to deal predominantly with the lower ability pupils, they could now be expected to work with any group, any time.

As the funding for statemented pupils was ring-fenced, it was a constant challenge to fund the resources to provide for all pupils. The TAs felt that more learning spaces and places to work would be beneficial, as would time for preparation and discussion with teachers. This had been built into the timetable for the following year.

Practical approaches/ best-practice resources

The SENCO felt that looking at personalised learning is creating the vision, and that 'everyone is on board'. She had looked at TAs' practice through performance management, focussing on them supporting groups of pupils as well as one-to-one, in terms of preparedness and of delivery. This had helped to identify any training needs, and an audit had also identified areas TAs were confident in and training they had completed. As part of this, they had each produced a case study of a particular child, looking at the barriers for, and needs of, that child.

The head teacher had 'looked at the teaching side of things', so that effective deployment and management of TAs had become part of lesson observation. This needed to demonstrate the cost effectiveness and value for money of TAs, and to justify why the school continues to employ them. The teachers found having another perspective on this useful, although they always considered the TA role in their planning.

For successful implementation of the changes, the head teacher said that there needed to be an enthusiastic ambassador for SEN within the school, and a culture of wanting to improve practice and knowledge – particularly amongst the TAs. Both the level of training and expectations of TAs were high in the school, so that resources, planning and inputs were shared to some degree. This could require a change of mindset for teachers and TAs. Staff would need to see the value of not continually removing pupils with SEN. However, relationships between teaching and support staff were reported on by all parties as being positive, and TAs felt that support was always available to them if needed.

The teachers had changed their perceptions of how to deploy TAs. The expectation – set very clearly – at the school was that, instead of sitting with pupils, they had an active role all the time. They were 'not just a pair of eyes', but were engaging with the lesson, moving around the groups, supporting differentiation. This meant that pupils with a wide range of ability made progress, as it enabled teachers to plan and teach from the pupils' own starting points. The direction provided by the teacher to the TA before the lesson was seen as key, and time had been built in to the school day for collaborative planning in the following year's timetable rather than this having to be done in TAs' own time. In this way, the TA had 'a role from beginning to end' of lessons. Whereas previously pupils with SEN could become reliant on always having a TA on hand, they were now supporting pupils to be independent. These pupils were now spending more time in the classroom, and teachers were spending more time with them.

The teachers talked through a list of ways in which they now deployed TAs:

- Working with groups within lessons (G&T, as well as SEN) or one-to-one, depending on the lesson and the needs – also sometimes still working with groups in another room.
- Delivering to the whole class whilst the teacher supports.
- Pre-teaching for pupils with SEN. Working with pupils before the lesson (on concepts, words, etc.) to help them be more active and engage with the main lesson
- Entitlement to teacher time for *all* pupils, and movement of TAs around the class.
- Setting up individual work stations and timetables for pupils with SEN. This is tracked by the TA throughout the day, to make sure it happens.
- Having a different role for the TA, making verbal response notes, listening to pupils and making assessment notes to support next steps.
- Input to groups from the TA, and feedback to teacher (e.g. on misconceptions) to plan for the next lesson.

The teachers felt that TAs had benefited in terms of subject and pedagogical knowledge by being in the classroom more in the mornings (as well as some afternoons, dependent on needs). Training was seen to be key, although TAs' different levels of strength could also be used to deploy them effectively in the afternoons with particular pupils. From the TA perspective, they were now doing more interventions, as well as one-to-one and group support, within classrooms – rather than always taking pupils out of class. They were also working with Gifted and Talented pupils. Over the past couple of years, they had been required to have better subject knowledge to be able to deliver lessons, to individuals as well as whole classes. They had received training for this, so TAs felt they had 'got to know what you're doing', and it meant that all pupils were able to get more 'teacher time'. Training for TAs (for example, in extra literacy, numeracy, behaviour, updated ASD, safeguarding, first aid) was said to now be of better quality and more focused on particular pupils' specific needs. The SENCO kept them informed of new developments, and they attended KS1 and KS2 meetings. Through discussion with the SENCO and SLT, the individual needs of pupils and the strengths of the individual TAs were matched, so that they could be deployed effectively. There was a lot of planning at this stage.

The MITA book (Russell et al 2012) had been found to be useful to underpin developments, and the ideas from this and the head teacher and SENCO seminar had been disseminated through staff meetings. The SENCO position had been made a non-teaching post, as the role had become more time-consuming. Outside agencies had been used, although the cost of this was an issue.

Attitudinal and cultural change/support for inclusive education goals more widely:

The SENCO commented that the TAs were recognising that they were important. Whilst teachers were taking more responsibility, they also recognised the need for team work with their TAs. One of the teachers interviewed had put training together for a TA who was not confident enough to work in the way she had planned for; therefore, she felt she was meeting the needs of the class *and* the TA. However, as the school became more experienced in SEN, it was attracting increasing numbers of pupils with SEN, which created challenges, as well as opportunities. The head teacher identified 'parents who don't accept their child has SEN', and persuading them to 'go for statements', as an issue.

The teachers suggested that the quality of support provided by the TA was dependent on the relationship they had built up together, which relied on valuing and respecting each other. It was now accepted in the school that pupils with SEN should not be removed from the classroom. Pupils with specific needs were catered for within the classroom, by tailoring

activities – both to keep them in the lesson, or to remove them briefly to help them to regain focus. The teachers also suggested that pupils with SEN did not now develop an expectation that they will work with an adult. The TAs felt that everyone was now more aware of what pupils with SEN could achieve, and pupils were now as comfortable approaching TAs as teachers to support their learning.

As behaviour and attendance had improved, parents were starting to feel that their needs were being supported, especially since the appointment of a home-school support worker. The head teacher said that, year on year, the school's value-added scores had improved, and that the progress for pupils with SEN was outstanding.

The teachers suggested that pupils' social development had improved as a result of interventions in the afternoon. However, the pupils with SEN had also benefited from staying in the classroom, having exposure to what everyone else was doing rather than missing parts of the lesson, spending time with their peers and hearing other pupils' ideas. From the start of the year, some interventions were taking place at lunchtimes, mornings and after school, so that these pupils were not withdrawn from lessons in which they may indeed be gifted and talented (for example, art or science).

The TAs singled out pre-teaching as having made an impact on pupils, as they subsequently had a much better idea of 'what they're doing' in lessons. They also felt they could see marked progress over the year through working with individual pupils, in terms of confidence, self-esteem and attitude.

Appendix 30: Case Study F: Smaller than average primary school, Coalville

Context

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There is one class for each year group from Reception to Year 6. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are both below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is also average. The school converted to academy status in 2012. In a recent Ofsted visit (2013) the school was judged to be 'good' overall.

Impact of project: How behaviour/practice has changed as a result of the project

The head teacher had perceived a 'real apathy to learning' when she first came to the school two years previously. Since her appointment, interventions in the school had been monitored. It had been seen that some pupils were rarely in classroom lessons, and that their progress was slow. The teachers commented that, from the data, groups of children with SEN at the end of Y6 had previously made no progress. They had started to track children with SEN to see how much time was spent in and out of the classroom, and found in extreme cases that particular pupils may only have been spending two afternoons in lessons, being taken out of the classroom for interventions after the initial input of English and mathematics. It had been acknowledged that moving pupils out of the classroom was not the answer, so the focus had shifted to keeping them with their peers. All of the interviewees commented that the last Ofsted inspection, prior to the school's engagement in the project, had commented on the quality of the TAs, who were 'highly qualified' and 'very skilled'.

In attending the Inspired Educators seminar, the head teacher had seen that they were 'on the right lines', as it reinforced her 'own beliefs and vision about where they should be going'. She felt the feedback the teachers had received following the seminar had served to 'back up' the changes that were already being made in the school, and had 'given them permission to change things'. The head teacher suggested it had given the teachers the confidence to accept that she was right!

Whilst the head teacher and teachers acknowledged that the project had reinforced the ideas and developments which were already happening in the school, the TAs were not aware of the existence of the Inspired Educators project, or that the school was taking part in it. The particular teachers interviewed had not attended training provided by the Teaching School but others had and they had fed back. The online video from the Inspired Educators project website had also been utilised.

The head teacher and teachers felt that engagement with the Inspired Educators project had increased their confidence in implementing the changes already happening, as 'cleverer people than them' had appeared to endorse them, and they had learnt about what other practitioners were doing along the same lines. The teachers suggested that it had also helped to open up more of a dialogue concerning the use of interventions. The head teacher commented that they had already changed the style of teaching in the previous year, in order to ensure that all pupils could participate more fully in the lessons. This was based upon a 'talk for learning' approach, emanating from the head teacher's current masters-level study, as well as 'precision teaching' (one-to-one, based on a specific need), and 'R-time'

(Relationships to improve education). The TAs felt that this had resulted in less teacher-led activity, and that pupils were learning more from each other. A 'conscious decision' had been made that class teachers must work with pupils more than TAs, and that this would be monitored in their planning.

The biggest change over the past two years, as acknowledged by all the interviewees, was that the volume of interventions had been greatly reduced. The SENCO was continuing to monitor these, and had identified those that had the most positive impact, with a 'short, sharp focus, reinforced by the teacher'. Teachers now had a better idea of how to deploy TAs, who were being used in a wider range of activities. Instead of almost exclusively working with the lower ability SEN pupils separately from the rest of the class, TAs could now be engaged in monitoring the whole class, or working with mixed ability groups, higher ability pupils, or in random pairs to 'make up numbers'. This would change lesson to lesson, and also within lessons ('carousels') and the teachers felt it enabled TAs to 'notice things', and sort out pupil misconceptions. The TAs commented that it had enabled them to get 'to know the higher and middle ability pupils better'.

It was seen as beneficial by all interviewees that teachers, rather than predominantly the TAs, were working more with the pupils with SEN. The TAs commented that 'teachers target the SEN children'. There was an expectation that teachers would now be working with their classes, and with pupils with IEPs, and the deputy head was now taking the lowest ability groups for phonics, rather than the TAs. Reducing the number of interventions had also released the TAs to take part in formal training activities. Two of those interviewed had completed an ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) course – one 'trained up' in KS1 and one in KS2. They had subsequently been released for two afternoons a week for this work – which was seen by all to be 'massively' beneficial to the well-being of the pupil body as a whole. Others had gained TA apprenticeship qualifications, which had 'skilled them up'. They felt themselves to be more a part of the teaching staff, 'sort of on a par' with the teachers.

Whilst the TAs did not perceive there to have been a change in the level of guidance and support offered to them – this had always been forthcoming, and the teachers had always discussed with them what was expected of them – they said that they were providing input to the teachers more, and communication between them had also improved. They felt that the quality of their work had probably improved as a result of them being in the classroom more, and being able to pick up the threads of the content of the lesson. They said, however, that any changes in their role had been gradual, rather than as a result of any recent developments or initiatives. The head teacher commented that the changes had flagged up where their CPD needs were, and where the TA role fitted in, and that they had 'felt a bit lost at first'.

The teachers felt that juggling the interventions had been difficult to manage for some of the pupils with SEN. Before the changes, they had limited access to their classmates, and were spending most of their time with other pupils with SEN. As a result of the changed approaches, they had more confidence, and were interacting better with their peers; the TAs commented that these pupils now felt 'more a part of the class'. However, pupils were still being removed from the classroom environment in particular circumstances (for example, if they needed quiet, away from distractions), albeit less frequently.

The impact on progress had been significant, as evidenced by this year's SATs results (which had arrived on the morning of the interview). These showed that pupils with SEN were closing the gap with their peers in mathematics, by making similar progress. Overall, pupils were making 3-4 points progress per year, which was outstanding, and the head teacher thought that the KS2 results 'may be the best ever' for the school. The teachers

commented that the pupils had also benefited socially and emotionally, and that the changes had built their confidence and self-esteem; that whilst 'you can't measure it, you can feel it'. Pupils with SEN were said to now have 'more of a voice', as they were not marginalised as before. The middle and higher level pupils were also said to have benefited, in that they were now receiving more attention. The TAs suggested that there had also been improvements made in terms of behaviour.

Although the head teacher was said to always involve the TAs in progress and curriculum meetings, they felt that allocated time with their designated class teacher to discuss lesson plans and expectations would be beneficial. Their request for INSET on co-coaching was being planned for the following term. They also felt they would benefit from more training regarding pupil behaviour. The teachers suggested that a more effective way of providing training opportunities (such as that provided through the Inspired Educators project) would be if teachers and TAs could attend and learn together.

Practical approaches/best-practice resources

The head teacher commented that the Inspired Educators project had fed into and reinforced the current SIP, and would also impact upon their foci and on CPD over the coming year. It was planned to begin training for TAs early at the start of the next academic year, which would include the continued use of outside agencies such as Leicester College, the Teaching School Alliance, the LA, and independent consultants. It was procedures, rather than policies, that had changed.

Having seen a similar project in Staffordshire, the Head Teacher had chosen the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) programme as part of the changes. This provision, which is led by the TAs and involves the pupil being referred by parents or staff as requiring support (due to family break-ups, bereavement, transition anxiety, bullying, friendship issues, or needs relating to autism, etc.), had been seen to successfully break down barriers, and 'get pupils back accessing the curriculum properly'.

The 'talk for learning' approach now being adopted throughout the school by teachers and TAs was being led by an independent consultant, chosen by the head teacher as she felt they were 'both coming from the same academic understandings'. As pupils were now having to engage in lessons, their confidence had improved. This was supported by pupils' 'engagement books', which were graded at the end of lessons by the teachers and TAs.

In terms of the maximising the impact of adult support it was felt that the staff have a better idea of how to deploy TAs more effectively for pupil learning – focussing on all pupils, not just those identified as having SEN.

The head teacher reported that a number of outside agencies had been used (as indicated above), at considerable expense – including the consequent cover/supply costs. However, the head teacher felt that the best quality had been the most expensive, and that making sure it was 'exactly what they wanted' was important. Finance was identified as the only potential barrier to improving support and learning for pupils with SEN; hours for statemented pupils, and staff issues (cover for maternity leave, absence, etc.), were mentioned in this regard.

The range of training opportunities for the TAs (outlined above) had given them time to reflect on their professional role, and the head teacher commented that this had been 'good for them' – as well as having knock-on benefits for the pupils.

The head teacher had found that many schools had not heard of the Inspired Educators project, and were still relying heavily on interventions. This suggested the project may need to be better publicised in the press, rather than just online, and by taking the message around the country. Schools should be encouraged to use the information from in-house reports to help start reviewing and monitoring their own practice. This will involve them looking at the real barriers to learning, rather than applying more interventions, and an open-minded, flexible attitude – such as the staff in this school were said to demonstrate.

Attitudinal and cultural change/ support for inclusive education goals more widely

The head teacher felt that the staff could now see that the pupils who 'have the most need, need teachers'. The factual information, in the form of in-house data, had supported the changes.

The school approach was described by the teachers as 'more inclusive', as all of the pupils of all abilities were now 'part of each class and part of the school'.

The teachers suggested that the way forward was for schools to 'talk to your TAs, and listen', as they themselves had done. They were no longer handing over problems to them, on the premise that 'the TA will sort it'. The SENCO had also taken over the task of completing the 'paperwork for SEN'. In turn, the TAs now had more time to do other things, such as ELSA training, which had benefited the pupils. As well as being upskilled, they were no longer 'run off their feet'. One TA had also been trained to run family support learning sessions, as the teachers had found that the parents of pupils with SEN frequently had low skill sets themselves. One outcome of the changes noted was that it had been possible to free people up to keep pupils in the mainstream, with all the attendant benefits.

Appendix 31: Case Study G: Smaller than average primary school, Barrow-in-Furness

Context

The school has approximately 160 children on roll split over 7 classes. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is much higher than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational is higher than the national average. The large majority of pupils are White British. Very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language. In an Ofsted inspection this academic year the school was rated as 'good'

Impact of project: How behaviour/practice has changed as a result of the project

The head teacher explained that prior to engaging with the Inspired Educators project the school had already been deploying TAs on the basis of need rather than simply allocating them to a particular class. This process had therefore become more child-centred, looking at what pupils needed 'in a personalised way', and allocating TAs with the correct training. Thus, TAs would work with pupils on areas such as reading, instead of always being used for IEPs. Rather than 'sitting with the bottom group', TAs were providing targeted support, tailored to the children. The 'hard evidence about TAs' provided by the seminar had served to reinforce the school's practice, and had underlined how inappropriate some interventions in classrooms may have been.

Whilst a formal action plan had not been drawn up specifically following the head teacher and SENCO seminar, the head teacher felt that developments in the use of TAs had continued on the same trajectory as formerly. However, the significance of training for TAs, and the need for time for teachers and TAs to liaise with each other before and after teaching sessions, had been acknowledged, and they were trying to build this in. Over the previous six years, the school had undergone a lot of change (driven originally by a 'notice to improve' from Ofsted during the head teacher's first year at the school), and much of this had been 'gradual, thought out in a strategic manner'; the head teacher identified the biggest change as a focus on learning, which the 'qualified and committed' TAs understood. More recently, this had involved more short interventions (for example, for ten minutes every day), rolling out phonics, reading recovery, and one-to-one teaching. The latter had seen marked improvements made by pupils – not just in the area one-to-one had been provided for, but in other areas of the curriculum, and seemed to be related to self-esteem and confidence.

Although neither the teachers nor the TAs were aware of the school's engagement with the Inspired Educators project, they recognised changes that had occurred over the previous few years at the school, and the teachers identified significantly improved results to indicate impact. The TAs felt that the benefits were more in terms of social and emotional well-being than academic results.

In contrast to the TAs 'hanging around', the teachers felt that they were now more targeted and focussed, and were moving around the classes to undertake interventions. Although there was still a requirement to spend time with pupils who had particular learning difficulties, they were now providing support for more pupils who needed it. On occasion, both the teachers and TAs would target pupils for one-to-one teaching in reading, whilst the rest of the class were engaged in independent reading time.

One of the TAs reported working predominantly with a pupil with complex needs one-to-one on activities and interventions for literacy and numeracy, to facilitate her inclusion in the mainstream. However, both TAs were also working with small groups, including 'booster'

activities for higher and middle ability pupils, which had also served to increase the TAs' own subject knowledge. They would discuss pupil targets and progress with the teachers, and were trusted to 'get on and use their initiative'. They were able to differentiate for pupils during sessions, and report this to the teacher afterwards. As well as being invited to have input, they now felt more supported. Prior to the changes taking place, they would have simply been told 'this is the IEP', whereas now it would be explained fully to them in diaried meetings with the SENCO. However, discussions with the teachers had to take place in their own time, before the start and at the end of the day, or during breaks and lunchtimes.

The teachers mentioned the lack of outside space as being a barrier, as outdoor learning could benefit the pupils with SEN in particular. In addition to an increased budget and the provision of more staff as enablers of change, they felt that teachers as well as TAs would benefit from training for certain conditions (such as ASD). The TAs also suggested that they would gain from further training, for their own professional development, and for the sake of the pupils. They felt they would also benefit from having resources 'at hand', rather than being required to track these down for themselves, and from having more quiet spaces for one-to-one work around the school.

Practical approaches/best-practice resources

The SENCO was leading the training for teachers on the first day back in September, although TA deployment and interventions for pupils had already been planned. The monitoring system, in line with the new Code of Practice, was going to be developed, with the over-arching target on the IEP to be broken down into small achievable targets, which the TAs would review with the teachers at the end of the week, in order to move the pupils on.

The teachers talked of the 'rota system' throughout the week, whereby the TAs would rotate to work with different groups. This was partly to do with enabling pupils with SEN to gain greater independence, so that they did not 'rely on having someone there all the time'. For one morning a week, the TA would work with a whole class in groups, by way of a carousel, which meant that other pupils were now given a chance to work with them as well. The teachers as well as the TAs now worked with the pupils with SEN, whereas previously the TAs would have worked with the 'lower group'. However, the TAs' perspective was that they still worked more than the teachers with these pupils. They anticipated further changes in September.

The teachers referred to the 'cleverer deployment of TAs', dependent on pupil need - which could occur at any time of year for different reasons, and so was recognised to be under constant change. This demanded that the staff were 'prepared to be flexible and to identify where the need is'. This might originally have meant a change of mindset, with teachers having grown used to having the same TA in their classroom every day over a long period of time, and building up a form of dependency. However, this was indicative of 'modern teaching', whereby it is not possible to 'have everything your own way - it has to be what pupils need'. They felt that the quality of support provided by TAs had improved, and that their confidence had grown as they had been trained in specific areas (e.g. phonics, ASD) and in different techniques. They were now willing to suggest changes to what teachers had planned for them to do, or to report back after teacher input that 'pupils didn't get that!' Teachers were willing to change their planning according to the feedback.

The teachers talked of the flexibility of the staff, working well as a team for the benefit of pupils, with everyone 'willing to do it', and of teachers as well as TAs having a role in identifying new pupil needs. Whilst this may have meant making compromises, it was

considered 'fair for everybody'. Relationships between teachers and TAs were good, and productive.

The head teacher commented that, as the percentage of pupils requiring support at the school was high, the SENCO position had been made a full-time role, rather than being class-based. The TAs identified this as being key both to the successful deployment of TAs and to supporting pupils and staff. In turn, the SENCO identified the staff at the school as hard working and committed, and training as being key to the TAs' success. Cost-effective training was organised on a local basis by a self-funding group of educational psychologists and teachers from local schools known as the Furness Inclusion Group (FIG), who shared good practice and offered workshops, etc., in areas such as spelling, dyslexia, and working memory. The SENCO, had also fed back to this group after the Mencap seminar.

Attitudinal and cultural change/support for inclusive education goals more widely

The head teacher felt that, as the TAs were seeing a change in the pupils, they were getting a better sense of job satisfaction. Teachers felt that they were able to pitch all activities at the right level, and that the classrooms were therefore more inclusive. They were encouraging peer support and learning, and also had a better understanding of what might be appropriate for pupils with SEN (suggesting they 'need practical things all the time'), all of which meant that they were better supported within mainstream education and in the school. The TAs also suggested that teachers were giving more consideration to differentiation in their planning.

Some impact on children's lives was noted. As well as the gains in self-esteem as reported by the head teacher, the teachers felt that there had been an increase in pupils' confidence and social skills. There had also been gains in emotional terms, as TAs were able to spend time with pupils who were upset or unsettled. The TAs commented that pupils with SEN were increasingly getting the support they needed in classrooms as the full-time SENCO had 'more time to fight for these pupils'.

Appendix 32: Case Study H: Smaller than average secondary school, Sheffield

Context

This smaller than the average-sized secondary school has approximately 850 pupils on roll. The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is average. Almost all students are of White British heritage and there are very few students for whom English is a second language. The proportion of students supported at school action is above average, while the proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. An Ofsted inspection in the academic year 2013 -14 rated the school as in need of improvement. There have been various changes in middle and senior leadership in recent years. The current headteacher is on secondment from another school.

Impact of project: How behaviour/practice has changed as a result of the project

The SENCO reported that provision for pupils with SEN had been recognised as 'second to none' by the Ofsted inspection in 2011, and was also commented upon favourably in the most recent inspection in March of that year. She had been in post for many years, and the SEN department had been viewed as successful. However, whilst acknowledging that the SEN provision had been seen as outstanding at the school, and had continued to be strong with statemented pupils, the head teacher said that gaps had opened up with SA and SA+ pupils. Progress of the most able pupils had also been an issue. The model of TA deployment had been sitting alongside pupils in the classroom, and, whilst some of the individual work had been picked out for praise by Ofsted, and the relationship with a particular adult might be crucial for some pupils, it was not having the 'collective impact' which was required. He explained that the school had gone through a period of intense change over the past year, as a result of an in-year deficit budget, combined with declining results over the past three years. Expenditure on support provision had been found to be the most significant aspect, as there had been a 'culture of intervention' at the school. This heavy reliance on interventions, especially at KS4, had not been sustainable. This had precipitated a redundancy/redeployment process, affecting the body of TAs. The SENCO had also decided to leave at the end of the year.

The head teacher felt that the head teacher and SENCO seminar had caused him to think much more carefully about how to deploy resources and TAs in general, and informed his thinking. Although he was already familiar with some of the research, it had been useful to hear it in its entirety, and to discuss it with others. He had been reassured that it had not moved on significantly, but that an important message from the seminar was 'this is not the fault of TAs'. He reported that the core provision at the school was working for all pupils, but structures which made it possible for teachers to deal with challenges needed to be re-evaluated. Difficulties occurred as a result of seeing TA activity as 'putting on something extra or different' for the pupil. The head teacher considered that the quality of this provision could not be as good as the input in the classroom from a qualified teacher. Such provision was becoming a distraction, and there had been unintended consequences in terms of diverting attention from planning effective differentiated lessons to ensure lessons were accessible and relevant for all pupils.

In looking at how staff were deployed, and the relationship between teaching and support staff, they had re-set the focus on quality in class teaching. This process was not as advanced as they would like it to be; the current SENCO was 'effectively closing things down', and the newly appointed SENCO was looking at the deployment of TAs for next year; apart from statemented pupils who needed one-to-one provision, the majority of the rest

would be in-class support, working with departmental teams. This would signal a move away from the 'parachute in' model, and the associated unintended (negative) consequences. In view of the impending national changes in relation to SEN, the school would be taking a 'fresh look at the SEN policy'.

Whilst the SENCO had found the seminar to be interesting, her concern was that people take a superficial view – that TAs do not have impact – and that puts them 'on the back foot'. She felt that this might give rise to different directions which are 'not necessarily as well thought-out as they might be'. Things had reportedly started to change quite rapidly after the seminar.

The teachers and TAs were not aware of the Inspired Educators project, and suggested that there was no need for any change of practice in deployment of TAs.

The head teacher acknowledged that the 'budget issue' had complicated the process of change. Regardless of the messages from national research and the Inspired Educators project, the school would have needed to look at the existing team and how to deploy them more effectively and efficiently, rather than reducing the body of TAs. He stressed the importance of getting the message across that this was not to do with the quality of provision they offered. He had tried to separate these two issues whilst moving towards new models of deployment. However, it appeared that those teachers and TAs interviewed did indeed feel threatened by this process. This was suggested *inter alia* by the comment from the SENCO that 'SEN does better than non-SEN', and the way in which the TAs spoke about the SEN department as a strong team and about their allegiance to the outgoing SENCO. They viewed the changes which were due to happen over the following three years in terms of an increased workload for them. The SENCO reported that they 'were pulling back on what they were doing, because they feel badly done to', and that 'the extra mile stuff had gone'. The teachers saw it simply as a 'cost-cutting exercise'; in their view, in terms of adults in classrooms, 'the more the merrier', as they equalled more support.

Ideally, the head teacher would have worked through the changes more collaboratively, but he anticipated that the 'big bang' approach which would take place the following year would be difficult for teachers and TAs. They had grown used to – and developed expertise in – a way of working, and 'pockets of practice' had been good. Teachers might find it hard to adapt to not having a TA in the classroom. A focus of CPD would therefore be to address the deskilling of staff, although he expected 'I told you so' and 'we need more TAs' to be possible reactions if things did not go well. The change would also be unsettling for parents, and they might question why the school was changing what they had done (ostensibly successfully) in the past. The 'managing of parental expectations' was identified as an issue, as they may view a reduction of hours to signify less in terms of the impact of provision. The reputation of the school as having 'strong SEN provision in a very particular style' was said to be linked to a community-wide perception that 'some children can, some children can't', and low aspiration.

The TAs felt that specific resources for a specific need (for example, physical disability) would be useful, but warned that pupils are becoming too reliant on a particular reading programme on computers in the school – and could make TAs redundant. The SENCO suggested that secondary school teachers find it hard to assess below current NC levels 3 or 4 and to teach to that level, and need support to understand SEN generally.

Practical approaches/ best-practice resources

Whilst the underpinning philosophy had undergone revisions, the way in which TAs were working had not altered during the current year. However, the head teacher reported that the

number of interventions had been reduced, and the focus had been on 'purpose and evaluation: is it support classwork, or additional, or separate?'. It was anticipated that, although direct interventions might be involved in the following year, TAs would be deployed in more general areas, as 'classroom technicians', to enable the flow of lessons. Teachers would be expected to utilise the expertise of TAs.

The teachers reported that there were 'a lot of interventions', but not always with the same pupils at the same time. They were concerned that the TAs were to be assigned in future to departments, rather than to particular pupils, as they felt this might disadvantage the smaller departments. They valued, and planned for, the support that TAs provided in lessons, and it would make a 'huge difference' if they were not there. A lot was to do with communication and relationships, and TAs would volunteer knowledge of a particular pupil if they felt it was needed. The breakfast and homework clubs, run by the TAs, were reportedly particularly appreciated by the pupils.

The TAs felt that they were now taking pupils out of lessons more for small group work, rather than working with groups in the classroom. If particular pupils were unsettled in a lesson, they might be asked to remove them. They did not have the opportunity to discuss or become involved with any of the planning with teachers, but had been guided by the SENCO. However, they were concerned that the incoming SENCO would be teaching for three days a week, whereas the current SENCO role had been full-time.

The SENCO reported that, currently, the TAs were deployed in different ways, but were encouraged to follow their particular interests and specialisms. For the past few years, each of them had been provided with their own 'TA toolkit', developed by the SENCO.

The school had introduced a 'lesson study model', which involved peer observation and feedback in triads. At the moment, teachers were fully engaged in this, and the head teacher talked of the possibility of involving TAs, as well as introducing a cross-discipline approach – with specialists (who may not be teachers) co-planning and evaluating. They are also looking at the possibility of TAs leading elements of in-house CPD programmes, especially as some have level 3 qualifications in specific needs.

The head teacher was confident of the quality of staff, referring to them as committed, as well as 'open and receptive to change', although he recognised that embedding the changes would be more difficult. However, the reduced staff, combined with the new Code of Practice and the incoming SENCO, meant they would *have* to change. To this end, the new SENCO would undertake qualifications, was already forming personal networks, and had the support of the LA.

Attitudinal and cultural change/support for inclusive education goals more widely

The head teacher spoke of the need for a change of mindset, to 'bring us back to inclusivity'. The presumption that something extra and different needed to be put in for pupils with SEN needed to be challenged, as this would not be at the same level of quality. It was not acceptable that some pupils would not achieve, which had been enshrined in CVA, but 'we must work on the basis that we expect the same quality of provision and outcome for all pupils'. The measure of the quality of provision would be with regard to how this had impacted upon vulnerable pupils, and whether basic provision was meeting the needs of every pupil. The governors, and middle leadership, were said to have shifted their view, recognising that patterns of SEN provision needed to change. However, the teachers did not recognise any need to change current deployment of TAs, as they had developed productive relationships and a 'shared understanding' – and 'it works'.

With the incoming changes, the onus would be on the teacher to differentiate in lessons, although the TAs would be able to offer opinions and advice. The SENCO felt that priorities in the school had shifted, and were now budget-driven. This meant, it was suggested, that there was a danger of losing the things that had distinguished them in terms of SEN, wider inclusion, and social inclusion. The SENCO's concern was that the school would become less willing to take on pupils with exceptional special educational needs and there would be an erosion of the inclusive ethos she considered currently existed.

The predicted results showed an improvement this year, and there was some evidence of the narrowing of gaps. The teachers felt that the pupils had made progress in terms of their communication skills through work with the TAs, and that vulnerable pupils in particular appreciated that 'there's somebody' there for them. The TAs measured this in terms of 'self-esteem, confidence, how they develop as people'.

Appendix 33: Case Study I Average sized secondary school, Lancaster

Context

The school has just under 900 pupils on roll. The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average. The proportion of students supported through school action is above the national average. There is an average proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. In the school's most recent Ofsted (2012) it was graded 'good'.

Impact of project: How behaviour/practice has changed as a result of the project

The SENCO reported that prior to the Inspired Educators project the school had already been focussing on techniques for using TAs in lessons. This was because they had witnessed the increased numbers and needs of pupils coming into the school for whom having 'someone just sat next to them' would not be enough for them to make sufficient learning progress, and was not cost-effective. In addition, as fewer pupils were now being statemented, TAs could not be allocated one-to-one. They had therefore been exploring alternatives. They were looking to make pupils more independent, requiring less support. The impact of providing 'solid support' in Years 7 and 8 could be felt in Year 9, where TAs could be released to do small group work more. As it was a requirement for teachers to plan for and justify the deployment of TAs in their lessons, all staff were able to access TAs' timetables. The deputy head had put together a document on the best use of TAs, and this had been the focus of a whole staff training session. The SENCO reported that changes in deployment of TAs at the school had stemmed from meeting need at the strategic level of planning, and the increased needs of pupils.

The SENCO was pleased that the head teacher and SENCO seminar had reinforced that the school was deploying its TAs to 'full maximum power already'. The seminar took place in a local school with whom they already had connections, and she had attended to check that they were 'doing things they should be doing'. The deputy head suggested it had reassured them that they 'were doing everything they can'. The evidence presented had demonstrated how redundant TAs could be in a classroom if not directed properly, amounting to 'velcro relationships'. Whilst the school's approach to deployment of TAs over the past year had not seen many changes, they had been made aware that the focus on 'quality first teaching' would alter the amount of in-class support and that there would be a 'gear shift' in terms of the role of TAs with statemented pupils.

Neither the teachers nor the TAs were aware of the school's involvement with the Inspired Educators project. The SENCO commented that there had not been the opportunity to build dissemination of the seminar into the school meetings or INSET activity this year, and that this had not been deemed necessary at the time. Techniques for using TAs had already been part of staff training, however, and it might become a focus for next year – particularly as deployment of TAs was 'always there as part of Ofsted's expectations'. Also, training needs had increased, as TAs were 'having to cope with so much more', including mental health issues amongst the pupils.

There appeared to be different perspectives on practice from the different parties, and a suggestion that lack of communication between them could be a barrier. This feeling of 'them and us' was illustrated when the TAs spoke very favourably of the 'TA team', and referred to the approachability of and support provided by the SENCO, who would 'back [them] up if [they had] issues with the teachers'. They also pointed out that they were

supportive of one another, sharing their experiences with other members of the team. They felt clear about what they (ideally) should be doing, but suggested constraints within the lesson impeded this, such as the requirement to support pupils with very different needs. They reported not feeling as valued as other members of staff, even though they felt they had a lot of responsibilities that they might not be asked to undertake in other schools. The teachers, however, referred to an inclusive ethos regarding training, whereby all opportunities were available to them and TAs, with no distinction being made between them.

Time was identified by the SENCO as an issue, as teachers and TAs needed to have conversations before and after lessons, and money was becoming 'harder to find'. The TAs felt they were being 'stretched thin', and there was a need to increase (rather than decrease – as seemed to them to be the government agenda) their number, as by 'ending up doing half a job' it was reducing their impact. They commented that 'key work will not happen next year', and that the 'nurture group' was being reduced from five to two afternoons per week. More staff, and more time to work one-to-one with pupils with ASD and those with behavioural problems to allow the space to 'calm down and talk things through' (as opposed to 'working on lesson objectives') might then enable these pupils to cope in the classroom.

The SENCO commented that she could not get in to see the TAs in class, but was 'sending eighteen [of them] out and trusting they're doing what they're supposed to be doing'. She suggested that having an 'outsider' come in and observe how TAs are deployed in lessons at the school would be helpful, as this would provide a neutral viewpoint. Feedback would then be used to identify gaps in training needs.

Practical approaches/best-practice resources

Prior to the past couple of years, the teachers felt that deployment of TAs had been 'a mixed bag', dependent upon individual teachers and relationships they had built up with particular TAs. The SENCO had worked with the teachers – and the TAs – to promote the need for conversations at the beginning and end of lessons, rather than simply taking the TAs for granted. This training, and a lesson plan proforma for lesson observations which identified 'use of other adults', meant that they now gave more thought to the deployment of TAs in their lessons. Although TAs were often assigned to particular pupils, teachers were encouraged to use the TAs to assist in different ways, so a degree of flexibility was required. Teachers said that they were more confident about planning for group work in their lessons, due to the support provided by the TAs – they talked of now including kinaesthetic activities, and card sorts to encourage extended writing rather than using a 'naff writing form'. However, although they said that they 'certainly plan for having a TA in the room', they commented that the TA did not always attend lessons as expected. They had needed to overcome a certain reticence about appearing to instruct the TAs, and were now providing them with text books to take home. TAs were also prepared to act more independently in class; they would help pupils they saw struggling, and attempt to solve the issues on their own before asking the teacher for any help. They were said to see themselves as 'extensions of the teacher', having a bigger role and input in lessons.

However, the TAs did not perceive this in the same way, suggesting that, due to the lack of guidance from teachers, they simply 'turn up in the classroom, and do what we think is appropriate' when working with whole classes. The support is therefore reactive, rather than planned. This was different when working with the nurture group, or with small groups and one-to-one teaching, where they were told specifically what was required. This direction was provided primarily by the SENCO, as there were no opportunities for forward planning with the teachers. However, they also suggested that some teachers were now open to suggestions from them, and had accepted that they had knowledge about pupils and issues relating to SEN. The teachers also reported that TAs had become more confident in talking

to them about pupils and in suggesting strategies, describing them as ‘knowledgeable’ about certain pupils; they were prepared to say if homework was too demanding for a particular individual, for example. Some of the TAs had received training in ASD the previous year, and continued to work with these pupils outside of the classroom. From the start of the year, pupils with SEN were being asked to produce pen portraits of themselves, which had proved particularly useful for pupils with ASD.

The teachers reported that the TAs were no longer being used to ‘sit next to the naughty pupil’, and that a list of possible things that TAs could do had been given out at an INSET day. However, the TAs felt there had been no change in the deployment of TAs, aside from a slight increase in group and paired work following the introduction of Kagan Cooperative Learning. One of them suggested that it was a case of ‘tick that box and move on’. Despite training the teachers had received regarding the use of TAs in more able classrooms, TAs saw the only opportunity for this to be with the pupils with ASD or medical conditions who might be of higher ability. However, the teachers spoke of the TAs working with A level students in their study periods, both on study skills and to reinforce what had been done in lessons. The TAs felt that it would be advantageous for them to work with the more able pupils whilst the teachers worked with the pupils with SEN. They also suggested that teachers should be more willing to let pupils out of the class to work with them one-to-one or in small groups on specific activities, especially in KS4, rather than them being ‘general – not directed’. They suggested that the school’s practice of putting two or three pupils with more extreme needs in the same class (so that one TA could support them all) caused difficulty, and was not the best use of TAs’ expertise. On the other hand, the teachers reported positively on changing the seating plans for their classes, so that pupils could sit together for TA support.

According to the teachers, interventions and ICT packages that the school was using had improved, with programmes being run by an HLTA. In extraction lessons, pupils were now covering what others were covering in the main lessons – so, working with, rather than against, the mainstream. The deputy head teacher had introduced Kagan Cooperative Learning at the school as a way of improving pupils’ social skills; pupils were enjoying the group and paired work, and TAs were said to be positive about it. The increase in groupwork had also enabled the needs of statemented pupils to be met more effectively. Although historically teachers had thought that TAs were attached to a child, they were now working with a wider range of ability. It was felt that the teachers had also become more familiar with SEN and other needs, and had received training in ‘differentiating up as well as down’, as the SENCO had promoted the idea that differentiation was the teachers’ responsibility.

The deputy head identified training and having a committed staff as being key to the changes, as well as the ethos of the school (‘every child is important’). This was corroborated by one of the teachers, who commented that ‘every child does matter on every scale [of progress]’. This was reflected in the SENCO’s observations that they ‘tolerate a lot’ and ‘go the extra mile’ for pupils. She also felt that she received solid support from the senior leadership team, which facilitated her role. The shift towards independent learning had been made possible by having the extra person in the room, as pupils were more confident with the TA there.

Attitudinal and cultural change/ support for inclusive education goals more widely

The SENCO commented that the TAs were now seen as the ‘mini specialists’ in the classroom, and were able to tell the teachers how best to deal with particular pupils – and teachers were accepting this. The TAs also said that some teachers were now willing to ask TAs for guidance and support, and there had been a growing acknowledgement that some of the more challenging pupils needed individual handling by TAs. They felt that teachers

displayed a more conciliatory rather than confrontational attitude towards pupils with SEN. The deputy head suggested there had been a fundamental shift in attitude from 'this child is not suitable for this school', to 'how can we suit them here'. In contrast, the TAs felt that some of the pupils at the school were not able to cope in the mainstream setting, but had fallen victim to a shortage of places in local special schools. One of the TAs emphasised the constraints of being in a mainstream secondary school, and of being restricted in what he could do.

The deputy head felt that the training in ASD had improved the support offered by TAs, citing the example of a pupil with autism who had been successful in obtaining level 3 qualifications in the sixth form, and who previously would have been expected to leave the school at the end of KS4. The teachers also commented that some pupils, who previously 'may have slipped out of the system', were 'making it to the end of school' and achieving GCSEs and BTECs, etc, and many were making it through the 6th form, due to the support they now received – and the expertise TAs were sharing with the teachers. Whilst the percentage of pupils with SEN had doubled over the past four years, the teachers felt that the impact of this had been lessened by changes in TA support. Fluency in reading amongst the low ability pupils had improved, and word recognition was better. The RAISEonline data indicated very good progress from SA and SA+ pupils at the school.

Appendix 34: Case Study J Average sized junior school, Yeovil

Context

This is an average-sized junior school (Years 3-6) set in an area of some deprivation in a small provincial town. The most recent Ofsted report (2013) states that there is a well above average proportion of children for whom the school receives the pupil premium and a well above average number of children who are supported at School Action, while the proportion recorded at School Action Plus or with an SEN statement is above average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The largest minority ethnic group represented is from Poland, and many of these pupils join the school after the start of Year 3. A small number of children from Gypsy Roma families attend when they are in the town. An increasing and above average number of children speak English as an additional language. The school was graded as 'good' by Ofsted in its recent visit

It is important to note that when undertaking this case study visit it was immediately apparent that it would be difficult to identify changes as a result of the Mencap input since the SENCO was herself delivering the training. The developments she had led in the school over some six years were already closely aligned with Mencap's aims and the research upon which the Inspired Educators project was based. The SENCO had previously disseminated the school's practice through mentoring, observation visits by teachers and TAs, sharing of materials and various other training for which the nearby Teaching School now provides a local hub. While the teachers, TAs and SENCO were asked questions within the interviews about changes that had occurred since the Mencap training, they often tended to respond more globally about their school's journey which pre-dated the training. The intention in this case study is therefore not only to capture their specific comments about the training, but also to identify the features of best practice, where the research-informed approaches promoted by the training are well established and could be described as embedded.

Impact: changes in behaviour and practice as a result of the Mencap Inspired Educators Project

The school has not followed the 'normal route' in response to the training since the SENCO describes them as being 'a long way down the road' already. The school has a high proportion of children with a range of special educational needs (SEN) which means that the approaches are well tested. The Mencap Inspired Educators model resonated with her approaches that focussed on effective deployment of TAs, with relentless attention to children's needs. It was important to validate the school's approaches as the wider research was published. The SENCO was in turn able to say to other practitioners that the approaches worked in a setting with vulnerable children with a high level of need, and to give practical advice and demonstration.

The SENCO recalls that there was publicity based on interpretations of research that suggested TAs were ineffective, which shocked some schools into planning to 'get rid of all TAs', but she quickly re-interpreted the research to her team as it clearly emphasises that it is the nature of deployment that matters. For example it called into question continual use of the one-to-one approach where children were spending long periods of time away from the most highly skilled person in the room – the teacher – and coming back into the classroom with no record of what the child had been doing. The TAs said in their interview that it is important to recognise that one-to-one is 'not always the bad guy' - it is sometimes important and necessary, however it was recognised that some TAs find it 'hard to let go' of the old model. The research supported the SENCO's drive to professionalise the TA team at the school, whilst recognising that TAs and teachers have different skills. She made sure that TAs' ideas were included in developing new ways of working as part of this process. The local Teaching School invited the SENCO to run the training for local schools and this was

aligned with other initiatives such as the 'TA pathway development group' already running. The local delivery was only in May (i.e. two months before the evaluation interviews took place). The teachers and TAs attributed much of the development in their own school and locally to the SENCO's clear and effective leadership. The teachers said that the school is known in the local area for 'good CPD and highly skilled TAs' and several examples were given of career progression; one TA interviewed had started as a school cleaner and was now doing her Foundation Degree, while the other, who has experience of SEN as a parent, had been on a number of courses in relation to her specialisms and interests. TAs called their own school a 'teaching school' even though not designated as such and described it as a beacon for local TAs to come and 'see how we work' through scheduled observations. They were proud of the SENCO and Deputy Head being mentors and trainers in the local area and had been approached by TAs in other schools wanting to move to the school.

Despite the existing good practice, the training provided through the Inspired Educators project this year was significant in the school's recent development. The teachers pointed out that it has been useful because staffing is in a constant state of flux, therefore updating and regrouping around the principles is always important. Policy becomes out of date quickly as requirements change. They were able to revisit priorities and reflect on current practices, inducting four new staff into the mindset. The teachers were able to give examples of where new staff didn't quite understand because things had 'blurred' over time. It was important to discuss and act, not just circulate documents. TAs said the previous training 'wasn't as intense' and saw the recent training as the culmination of the school's journey, taking it 'from strength to strength'.

The training helped to highlight the need for clarity in teachers' lesson planning, which now includes explicit planning for TAs, for example defining what kinds of questioning and what vocabulary to focus on. Teachers and TAs very much appreciated the clarity of the approach where the lesson plan states what the TAs focus will be and what s/he is to do. Furthermore, there is allocated time for teachers to go through and discuss the evidence/evaluation sheets with TAs, partly using PPA time and partly timetabled in for TAs. Email is also helpful for sharing documents. The tools used to document progress are therefore not only providing a record. Teachers were clear that they scaffold progress.

This process has 'sharpened the focus on learning' and has led to specific developments led by teachers with TAs. For example one TA was not sure what questions to use with books in the 'Reading Box' so the teacher has begun to make laminated cards with lists of examples (e.g 'inference questions'), which has now enabled the TA to see what is required and devise her own lists. A format for lesson planning has been emailed out to staff with space to write the TAs' focus and contributions. Written feedback is also given on any interventions managed and led by TAs so that teachers are 'totally aware' and can track developments and children's progress. TAs also contribute an 'intervention report' to the reports sent to parents where appropriate, which the SENCO guides and checks. Importantly, TAs are given paid time to complete the reports. The coherence of the documentation improves its effectiveness and this is monitored closely by the SENCO, where previously teachers commented that such evidence was lacking. The training has therefore given the SENCO an opportunity to raise the level of responsibility shared amongst staff and to increase collaborative planning and review, from an already high standard.

Teachers also noted that the school has shifted its approach from a predominant focus on literacy, to more balance with the mathematics aspect of the curriculum. The school has applied the approaches with TAs for literacy interventions in numeracy, for example by identifying TAs with confident mathematical knowledge and the ability to develop questioning. TAs spoke enthusiastically about some of the new interventions such as 'Nippy Numbers' which was introduced by one of the TAs interviewed, linking with her Level 4

specialist TA qualification. As well as subject specific developments there is balance with the emotional and wellbeing aspects of the curriculum including popular 'theraplay' and cooking/healthy eating sessions for both children and parents. Many of these initiatives are led by trained and skilled TAs.

Another direct outcome of the Mencap training will be a TA deployment policy which can be written very easily but makes the school's approaches and expectations explicit having grown organically over a number of years. The training uncovered some tensions between what teachers might expect of TAs and what they understood their roles to be. For example, marking homework is not considered to be a TA responsibility but a new member of staff had made that assumption. When this emerged, it was challenged in the discussion. This might overflow into other policies such as the assessment policy and the induction policy for new staff. Teachers were aware that this was going to be written and whilst they did expect the SENCO to draft the document, the usual practice was to then consult with staff before finalising it. Teachers saw policy development as a natural progression from improved practices so that roles and protocols were clarified and owned by all staff.

With the advent of the new SEN Code of Practice and two Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) arriving next year, the SENCO is going to wait for things to settle in before auditing the state of play using the format in the MITA book (Russell et al 2012), which she found very useful but has re-typed and slightly adapted so as to tailor it to the school's needs. This may flag up further issues to work on.

In other schools the SENCO has seen TAs complete weekly monitoring sheets and SENCOs from other schools have obviously completed the National Award for SEN Co-ordination which aligns with the Mencap approaches, taking account of the underpinning research. Several other schools have TA deployment policies in place now and have discussed what headings should be used to achieve some consistency. The SENCO has therefore seen reinforcement of the training rather than it standing alone in changing practices and cultures and mindsets.

The SENCO has sometimes been worried in the training of staff from other schools that she is 'teaching them to suck eggs', but she always comes back to the needs of the children, where chances cannot be taken and everything possible must be done to improve provision. This involves working on TAs' skill sets, teachers' practice and SEN leadership in parallel, to align mindsets across a whole school to the point where everyone shared responsibility. These changes need to be properly managed and co-ordinated.

The teachers, whilst appreciating the opportunities for discussion during the training, felt that it could be improved with less 'delivery by Powerpoint'. They said they would prefer more group discussion and suggested the use of scenarios (fictional but authentic) about teachers, TAs, children, families and classroom situations, which could provide the focus of conversations to start to apply the learning hypothetically in a 'safe space'. Scenarios could also be used to demonstrate what works well. Teachers felt that it would be valuable to train teachers and TAs together to mix perspectives as happens day-to-day in the classroom.

The SENCO would like to see the evidence from this evaluation collated and circulated to schools, trainers and Teaching Schools. It is important to see the impact of the project and also to note where improvements could be made. She feels people are interested in this and any further research and the implications for their practice and school development priorities. She feels there is a lot of valuable collaboration locally and that schools linking into this have found it valuable.

Practical approaches and best practice resources

The SENCO, teachers and TAs explained consistently the process that the school has followed to reach the current state of good practice:

1. Audit the skills and qualifications of TAs, including interests and hobbies as these might be very important in addition to qualifications.
2. Deploy them making use of these skills, whilst also taking into account the human dynamics (the deputy head said 'some people are Tiggers, some are Owls, some are Eeyores – you don't put two Tiggers together' – in other words there needs to be a balance of styles and relationships to keep the classroom climate even and positive).
3. Identify gaps and address them through appointments or training.
4. Clarify roles and responsibilities in supporting children's learning which includes responsibility for effective communication and collaborative working between teachers and TAs and invest in time to enable this to happen.
5. Keep a close eye on children's changing needs and move them on continually in terms of interventions and support, with the aim of inclusion.
6. Build a strong professional culture for TAs as well as teachers so that they feel valued, progress in their professional development according to their current situation, needs and preferences, are well trained, skilled and confident and feel part of the team.
7. Listen to TAs' views and perspectives with regard to the local community and use this as a positive resource when meeting the needs of individual children.
8. Encourage TA leadership so that they are able to take the initiative, raise issues and lead developments as appropriate, including the induction and professional development of other TAs in school and from other schools.
9. Make no apologies in putting the needs of the children first in all developments and day-to-day activity. The SENCO said 'you can't pussyfoot' in making changes that will benefit children's learning and wellbeing.

The process of improvement requires not only making changes (to staffing, training, classroom organisation, school structures, resources and materials) but also communicating consistent messages and aiming for a culture where there is a high level of professionalism and shared responsibility amongst TAs and teachers, whilst still monitoring closely.

All those interviewed explained the tightness of communications and teamwork where space and time had been allowed and formats and structures provided, to support planning, implementation, reporting and review. Teachers and TAs endorsed the SENCO's description of collaboration in lesson planning, with clear expectations set out by teachers and TAs expected to give reports of interventions. There was also evidence of the teachers and TAs taking this further, for example in the sheet of questioning prompts for particular books, as mentioned earlier. The documentation of progress was immensely detailed, leaving no room for assumptions or guess work. For example one teacher showed a comprehensive list of vocabulary with words that had been used three times carefully highlighted to show they had been adopted and words still to learn still unmarked. Teachers said that previously the work by TAs in interventions might have been of a high standard but there was 'no evidence', leaving them no formal ways of connecting this up with work in class; this has now been remedied in a way that is very much owned by teachers and TAs working together.

Another aspect of teamwork was the way in which TAs worked together around the children to attend to the tasks set whilst still being subtly responsive to what happens minute by minute. They had been trained in 'total communication' which they described as more intuitive than British sign language, and the school is designated as a 'County Total Communication School'. This approach empowers children to communicate and can be personalised, for example one TA had a badge with a tent picture as she likes camping, so

she is known to children by her hobby as well as her name. The other TA has introduced the signing and symbols into singing lessons that she leads. However there was also a powerful use of this medium in supporting classroom learning.

While the interview took place, minor noise disturbances caught the TAs' attention and the interview was interrupted as they could not concentrate until they had attended to them, checking the playground from the window and visiting a next door classroom. The noises were so slight as to cause no distraction to the interviewer but the TAs knew which children were involved straight away and were clearly communicating with glances and gestures to satisfy themselves everything was alright.

TAs explained that this intuitive communication was their normal way of working, into which they would induct new team members, which enabled them to keep the dynamics of the classroom balanced and attend to any issues swiftly without even speaking, thus not disturbing the learning of the class or interrupting the teacher's flow. They clearly enjoyed their skills and knew that teachers counted on this sophisticated support.

Resources shown at the interviews included:

- Lesson planning formats including a section for TA focus and TA guidance.
- Regular reporting sheets for each child's interventions with TAs.
- Parent reports with section for TA to report on intervention progress.
- Prompt sheets co-designed by teacher and TA to scaffold questioning on a particular book.
- Lists of vocabulary with highlighter codes to demonstrate to teacher what has been covered with TA.
- Whole school audit tool adapted from the MITA book.

By the autumn there will also be a TA deployment policy, as explained above.

The SENCO illustrated the ways in which the approaches have been exceptionally successful. She gave the example of a boy who was going to be permanently excluded in Year 2 for challenging and aggressive behaviour and also had a high level of learning need. He was at a Pupil Referral Unit and the school took him on in September in Year 3. Initially they worked jointly with the PRU and met with the child and family together and identified a TA to be a key worker for him. His tutor at the PRU started working with him at the school to manage the transition. An individual classroom support package was put in place according to his statement. He was involved in 'theraplay' sessions led by TAs and staffing was organised so that he could have one to one time with his class teacher. After the October half term he was able to progress to small group learning. He used the sensory room with his peers regularly and took part in cooking sessions which has led to a healthier diet. He is now essentially in the mainstream classroom and although he might still have a number of interventions, they are much reduced as he approaches Year 4.

The materials in the MITA book (Russell et al 2012) were valued but it would be very helpful to have downloadable resources (such as the audit sheet) either in the training or connected to the book, so that they could be adapted and customised for school's particular needs.

Attitudinal and cultural change: support for wider inclusive education goals

The interviews with SENCO, teachers and TAs showed remarkable consistency with regard to attitudes and values and a clear picture of the school culture emerged. This had developed over a number of years, since the arrival of the current head teacher and deputy. It did not therefore represent a change that had taken place since the training, but could be

said to represent the culture towards which the Mencap training is working. The main characteristics are discussed below.

All those interviewed were very clear about the moral purpose underpinning their implementation of these approaches aligned with the Mencap Inspired Educators project. The SENCO came back to the needs of the children several times, for example in justifying the reduction in number of TAs over the years (although she did say it was fortunate that this had happened mainly by 'natural wastage') and explaining the need to sharpen the learning focus. The teachers were absolutely committed to children's learning and also wellbeing and had seen cultural change over the years. TAs said everything has to be 'in line with the children'. Everyone recognised that this is what drove the SENCO's decisions in deploying TAs and teachers said 'this is what we are good at - supporting the whole child'. They described the need for 'listening ears' and the value of interventions like 'theraplay' that help families who 'seemed scared to play together' to learn how to interact positively together, supported by TA modelling of how to talk and how to guide. This also has much potential to support transition from Year 2. There was much reference to food and healthy eating, with the 'Let's Get Cooking' initiative again encouraging families in, showing them that where their child 'doesn't eat fruit', a smoothie might convince them. TAs are often leading and even initiating such ideas. The deputy head, in reflecting on the journey since she and the new head arrived and the difference it has made, concluded, '....they know they are loved'.

All the interviews showed that the deployment of TAs is a whole-school approach and is not especially focussed on children with SEN. There has been an explicit move away from TAs working with specific individual children on a one-to-one basis, towards leading and managing a tapestry of interventions that may be appropriate for different children at different times and are seen as part of, not separate from, the classroom learning. TAs work with teachers across a whole class and are also deployed according to their skills to work across classes and ages. The provision that the SENCO leads and manages must therefore be seen as dynamic rather than static – it needs to be responsive but also directional, clearly addressing individual children's learning and progress which change over time. The continual careful monitoring and review ensures that children do not get 'stuck' in routines from which they should have moved on and that TAs do not stick to their comfort zones. The TAs interviewed made clear that they expected and embraced change.

A powerful message from all those interviewed was the importance of giving attention to relationships which was seen as the foundation of the school's improvement. The teachers and TAs felt there was now mutual respect and explained they have a 'script' that they use with children to prevent escalation of day-to-day issues, using their intuition to intervene and 'calm things down' as a team. The result is that such incidents are becoming rarer and it is now more usual to negotiate and focus on the positive; rather than using formal disciplinary measures to control behaviour the TAs will talk things through with the children. They felt very confident about this and articulated their approach enthusiastically, giving the impression that they were well trained, had a repertoire of skills and trusted one another to work intuitively together with clear goals to support the children's learning.

Several examples of particular children's experiences demonstrated that the ultimate goal was to ensure all children stayed 'full time in the classroom'. It was quickly apparent that by this, staff did not mean they were physically in class all day. It meant that they were at school and accommodated by the schedule of learning and teaching that might involve various interventions taking place in the course of the lessons including coming out of the actual room under the teacher's jurisdiction to work with TAs or other professionals as appropriate to their needs. Both teachers and TAs saw this as part of classroom time and interventions were continually adjusted as needs changed (usually reduced).

The new Code of Practice was described as a vehicle for children to have more say in decision making. One of the TAs interviewed, who has a son with ASD, explained the process of person-centred review where the child arranges their own meeting, decides who should be there, arranges the room and determines the agenda. She saw this as a chance for the child to hear 'what they're really good at' as the positives are identified and articulated and targets are set for parents and professionals. In this process as a TA she would facilitate but not input to the meeting and can see the benefits of the child being in control, being the listener and being central to the process.

All the interviewees demonstrated individual and organisational commitment to improvement. The TAs said 'no school is perfect' and emphasised the need to adapt, change and 'fine tune' the provision as it always needs to be better. This is done through a process of stepping back, reflecting and observing. TAs understood, for example, that the new Code of Practice would require changes and they had been taken through what it would mean and were working out what changes needed to be made. The SENCO was already planning a schedule for auditing having brought in changes and inducted new staff, and showed several brand new tools and frameworks that had been introduced since the Mencap training, which were then explained and demonstrated in the teacher and TA interviews. With over 30 interventions running simultaneously there was a need for continual review to respond both to policy change and to the changing needs of the children.

The starting point for the Mencap-aligned approaches was the identification and nurturing of TAs' particular interests and skills. The TAs said that in order for their team to work effectively it was necessary to have a confident and efficient SENCO who was willing to listen. They also realised that personalities were important and that individuals were carefully matched with teachers with whom they could work well. The valuing of TAs went well beyond lip-service – their training was a huge investment, they were encouraged to seek qualifications from at least Level 2 NVQ upwards and two were doing Foundation Degrees. They described the SENCO as 'knowing us better than we know ourselves' in terms of finding strengths and skills. For example one TA was skilled in literacy, emotional literacy and therapeutic play working with families, whilst others were focussed on numeracy, cooking or singing. Training enhanced these skills or filled gaps. TAs interviewed spoke about their work-based learning for qualifications which involved them in leading initiatives and doing enquiry work to contribute to school development. The valuing of them by the school and particularly the SENCO translated into self-belief and self-confidence in their different but parallel role in supporting children's learning and wellbeing. Asking them to write intervention reports and keep records of progress also served to ensure their work was valued and integrated but was carefully delineated so that roles did not become confused or blurred. Finally TAs were given time – meeting teachers in PPA time, their own meeting time and opportunist approaches such as working on a strike day to complete reports under the SENCO's guidance (only teachers were on strike and this meant children could not attend). The message was clearly that outcomes could only be maximised by investing properly in this crucial TA team – there were 'no short cuts'. TAs said the Senior Leadership Team promoted the message that staff are the main resource and believed in them and trained them accordingly.

Both teachers and TAs recognised that TAs have particular knowledge and experience from living within the community that teachers cannot bring, since most teachers live outside the immediate area. TAs were described by teachers as 'the voice of the community'; they pick up the issues in families, often because they live in the same street, and can often explain changes in behaviour or difficulties that children are unable to leave beyond the school gates. An example was given where a girl was too traumatised to take her SATs and the TA was able to explain what had been happening so that action could be taken to support her.

The school used this knowledge subtly; it was quietly valued as essential to understanding individual children and their needs.

Appendix 35: Case Study K: Larger than average sized secondary school, Barnsley

Context

This is a much larger than average secondary school with approximately 2100 pupils on roll. It opened in the academic year 2012 – 2013 following an amalgamation of two secondary schools. The proportion of students supported through school action is slightly higher than that found nationally. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is close to the national average. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage and a small proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is slightly lower than that found nationally. The school hosts the local authority sensory resource provision for students with hearing and visual impairments. In the school's most recent Ofsted (July 2014) it was graded 'good'.

Impact of project: How behaviour/practice has changed as a result of the project

The SENCO explained that the school had been created through the merger of two schools, neither of which had appeared to have 'done a lot around data. She commented that this had become a focus with the new head teacher, leading to a 'push on data', whereby they had looked for evidence of how best to support pupils' progress.

The assistant head teacher interviewed during the case study visit had been appointed as the SEN Thread Leader (SENTL). As assistant head teacher with this responsibility she provides the link between the SEN department and the Principal's Leadership Team. Prior to being appointed to the post as a 'strategic leader', the assistant head admitted to being quite inexperienced in SEN. Attending the seminar soon after this had therefore been pivotal, and she viewed the MITA book (Russell et al 2012) as 'the starting point', as it had demonstrated to her 'how it should be done'. It had underlined that the support workforce at the school was being underused, and that the system needed overhauling in order to get the best out of the staff. The data had suggested that the needs of those on the SEN register were not being addressed. The school had not been meeting national expectations for those pupils recorded at School Action and School Action Plus and some receiving support may have subsequently been making less or even no progress. This latter point had been highlighted by the seminar, and cascaded to the rest of the SEN department. Overall, the Inspired Educators project was supporting what they had already thought to be the case with regard to TA deployment, and had 'given weight' to the SENCO's and assistant head's arguments about how TAs should be used. The SENCO had found it useful to be able to quote the research presented at the seminar. It had also changed thinking with regard to the need for TA training and development. The policy for the new SEN Code of Practice would be informed by the MITA book.

Whilst the teachers were still to undergo training related to the project, there had been a 'root to the tip of the branch' reorganisation of the deployment of TAs. Rather than the traditional TA role of sitting beside (particularly statemented) pupils, the SENCO commented that debates and discussions with the TAs had taken place following the seminar, encouraging them to move around the classroom more, checking on needs. This was referred to as 'check and walk' and signalled a move away from 'being glued to a child'. Whilst some were assigned to pupils who 'have hours', how TAs worked with those pupils had changed. As SENTL the assistant head was getting the SEN department to see themselves in the same way as subject departments, and to recognise the need to accept joint accountability. There had been a change in philosophy to one of valuing the TAs, through the team leaders, and in providing clear structures. They were being encouraged to engage in discussion and

dialogue with teachers, rather than an attitude of ‘the teacher wanted me to do it that way’. There also needed to be an acknowledgement that TAs might know the pupils better than the teachers – especially as year teams of TAs moved up the school with whole cohorts.

The SENCO suggested that attitudes had caused some problems with taking forward the changes. There was ‘still a lot to be done around how teachers should use support staff’, and possibly more training time was needed for that. They had also experienced some difficulty with parents accepting the changes. Parents of some stated that pupils almost demanded the support they considered their child *should* have – rather than what they needed. It was also quite difficult at times to get the TAs to ‘move on’, especially those who were ‘older and more traditional’, or used to staying with the same pupil. The assistant head commented that ‘being accountable for pupils has come as a shock for some’. Equally, it was taking teachers time to realise that they were responsible for the progress of pupils with SEN, and that they now needed to plan how they were going to use TA support in the classroom. This change had been driven by decisions made nationally, as well as within the school. The school was working to change the attitude that those pupils were ‘someone else’s problem’, and ‘belonged to the SEN department’, but teachers needed to feel they had the skills and understanding of what they should do to make work accessible. There was a perception that Initial Teacher Education (ITE) was not preparing them for their responsibilities as teachers of pupils with SEN. Rather, the SENCO was seen as the expert.

Additional time and funding to ‘double the size of the SEN department’ and to increase the training opportunities for TAs would be welcomed by the assistant head. She also felt it would be useful to see how other schools were measuring social, emotional and mental well-being, as the focus of classroom teachers tended to be on academic progress. The SENCO commented that, as teachers and TAs needed to ‘buy into the idea of having to change’, it would have been good to have had ‘something which could ignite a change’; for her, this had been the ‘shock’ of the evidence presented at the head teacher and SENCO seminar which had ‘made it stick’. It would also have been useful to have heard viewpoints from other schools, with examples of how they deployed TAs and what other SENCOs were doing.

Practical approaches/ best-practice resources

The number of interventions had increased, rather than supporting pupils in class, and effectiveness was continuously monitored by looking at where pupils were making progress. Specifically, literacy and numeracy interventions were being targeted at all pupils with levels of under 9.6 years, and the TAs were felt to be better trained in providing this than the teachers. There was an emphasis on finding out if a pupil needed help by ‘breaking down the information’ regarding their targets rather than ‘being cuddly about it’. The focus was on progress, and the SEN teams were working to analyse what pupils needed to do, and what support was needed.

Support was now more focused, and pupils with SEN were spending more time in the classroom with their peers. TAs were working on ways to enable pupils to become more independent learners, rather than encouraging ‘learned helplessness’, and support which was ‘stifling’.

In addition to the MITA book, the appointment of a strand leader for SEN (the SENTL role) was seen as key - although she had been viewed initially as a ‘fox amongst the chickens’, making the SEN department ‘nervous’. The assistant head in her role as SENTL held twice weekly meetings with the SENCO with the aim of improving SEN provision at the school. There were local network meetings of SENCOs to discuss these issues. All staff were

receiving training on data. The TAs were being trained in the use of SISRA⁹ to enable them to see if progress was being made by pupils or not on the basis that 'if teachers need to know it, *they* need to know it'. The SENCO regularly observed the TAs' practice, and encouraged them to consider the difference they thought they were making to pupils, and different ways of doing things. The training provided by the school for NQTs and student teachers included the use of support staff, and the need to create a dialogue and a partnership in the classroom, with the teacher as the senior partner. TAs had been put on the same appraisal system as teaching staff, albeit not related to performance management, and this provided recognition of their work.

Attitudinal and cultural change/ support for inclusive education goals more widely:

All pupils' needs are being identified by close scrutiny of the data, whether classified as SEN or not. Provision for pupils was being based on need, not on what was 'written on documentation'. The onus was being placed back on teachers; it had been recognised that pupils need teacher time, as well as TA time, and that teachers as well as TAs should be working with the pupils with SEN. At the same time, TAs were there to support *all* the pupils in the classroom.

The SENCO felt, however, that there was more evidence of a change in attitude from the TAs, and that the teachers – whilst aware that things had changed – needed 'to be developed further'. The school wanted the teachers to think more about planning to include pupils with SEN in the lesson, and less about 'what can the SEN department do?' Part of that year's CPD programme would be enquiry-based activity exploring differentiation and planning for pupil progress from one grade to the next. The assistant head commented that the school benefited from having a sensory resource for hearing and visual impairments, and that teachers already planned to include those pupils (in addition to the SA and SA+ pupils). As a new school, with a 'progressive SLT', the attitude towards inclusive education goals was 'really accommodating'.

The quality of support provided by TAs was described by the assistant head as a 'work in progress – getting better, not perfect'. Data had shown improvements for individual pupils, including some statemented pupils; it had been seen that not all of them needed TA support, and some had done better without a TA in the class. Pupils overall were aware they were now expected to do more for themselves. Behaviour for learning (BfL) was 'taken very seriously' at the school, and pupils were ranked on their social-emotional behaviour according to the following four categories: self-discipline, contribution and engagement in lessons, respect, and independent learning. As pupils were being withdrawn less out of the classroom, and not working by themselves, they were experiencing being part of the lesson more – socially, as well as academically.

⁹ A web-based service designed to allow schools to process their performance data, track progress and attainment, then evaluate impact.

