

Creating a Workforce Development Programme for Support Staff (Case Study)

What have we learnt?

The following learning has been collated having reviewed the data, and from conversations and questionnaires with schools, providers, parents, practitioners and children and young people following the initial working groups and the early 'Keeping in touch' meetings.

See the strand learning and illustrative Case study below.

Generic Learning

Recruitment has been a challenge for many projects, and many have had to be creative in terms of sharing, backfilling, training, and developing existing staff or inducting staff new to education but with relevant skills sets or experience.

Collaborative work needs excellent regular communication to ensure that all parties have similar expectation and a collective belief that the project will meet their needs. This has been an issue for some in terms of 'identifying the bar for referral' for example.

Collaborative working needs staff to be flexible to work effectively across different ethos's etc.

Systems such as supervision, Lone Working and Safeguarding need to be clear, consistent, and managed across the partnership.

Projects can support and act as drivers towards whole school initiatives such as developing a sense of Belonging or pupil mental health and wellbeing.

All reporting projects have identified significant improvements in attendance, behaviour and parental confidence for a number of the pupils engaged in the project.

Several projects suggested that their projects will reduce the number of EHCP and Special School applications over time.

Creating branding for the project e.g. The Bridge can create a stronger community partnership and joint ownership feel rather than a situation where one school is 'doing something' to others.

Strand 4 Creating a workforce development programme for support staff.

Early Learning

- The programme can raise staff awareness and understanding of individual learner's needs across the school.
- The staff feel valued and make better contributions to SEND support and work more closely with the teacher.
- Enables staff to adopt effective targeted approaches to meet the needs of individuals in your school.
- Develops a learning culture and environment across the school.

- Develop the use of effective classroom management strategies to support good classroom behaviour.

Case study

The Eastbourne Alliance project

The Eastbourne Alliance 2 project, led by the Cavendish Education Trust, is piloting a workforce development programme for support staff.

Each school in the alliance has selected a TA based around the SEN Diploma (Level 3) with additional work around topics such as therapeutic thinking and coaching and study skills. They have appointed an experienced former head teacher to deliver the programme which is overseen by the Alliance Heads.

As part of the monitoring process 29 SEND pupils across the schools have been identified and tracked to assess the impact of the work. The programme is run over one year with release time for TAs to complete the units, they are observed in class as part of the programme and the intention is that they will share their learning and experiences from their different schools and share the learning with colleagues in their schools to raise the quality of SEND support across the Alliance.

Schools are now hosting visits for other TAs from the course. [Prior to the project SENTA confidence in how to support children with high needs, was low.

The mid-year reviews and feedback from Heads, SENCOs and class teachers are positive indicating that the TAs are:

- Learning from each other and are sharing strategies with colleagues.
- Growing much more confident in and outside the classroom in how to support SEND pupils.
- They are going to the SENCO themselves with ideas where a child might benefit from a strategy they have learned.
- More proactive and have a greater understanding and awareness of the SEND environment.
- They have developed their range of strategies to support SEND pupils.
- Staff are using the TT vocab more and this is being shared with the teaching team.
- This training has given them a spark, development and career opportunities moving forward.
- Building good relationships with the children they work with, and the children are responding.
- Children love working with them (the TAs), they love the class stories, they do all the voices, their humour is coming through as they gain in confidence.
- It was good for her (a TA) to show another TA around our school, and this gave her a better understanding of the bigger picture in her own school.

Children:

- They have made a lot of progress these past two terms and are showing confidence and resilience.
- They are developing a lovely relationship with the SENTA. The child is timid, but they love and can't wait to work with the SENTA.
- Their attendance has improved, not so many lates.
- They are seeing themselves as a learner.
- They are answering questions in class.

The children are really coming along, and the books show the progress pupil questionnaire responses have improved from 5-8 pts to scores between 7-8.

The SEND children being monitored* have made better progress as evident in their books and their engagement in class. In some cases, attendance has improved, they feel better supported and the children are more confident in class.

*The children selected may display behaviours that are difficult on challenge the school staff e.g. children awaiting assessment, referral, on the autism pathway etc. All are in the class where the TA is working but not accessing any strategies currently.

‘The programme has been a remarkable success, transformational for some TAs and is beginning to have a significant impact on the progress of the SEND pupils across the schools’ Kyra Siddell-Ward, Primary Executive Headteacher Bourne SENTA comment -I feel like my practice has definitely both changed and impacted on the children that I work with. I also feel like I am more understanding of children, their behaviours, and their needs. The course content, alongside the input from other members on the course has been a great way to find out:

- that others are in the same boat,
- about different ideas and techniques to support the children we work with, and
- how to be able to vent frustrations from the week with other people who understand the challenges we all seem to face in our roles.

Pupil comment Child case study

During Term 4, Child B completed a phonics assessment, and he scored 1. At that time, he struggled to blend and segment any words. I have been working closely with Child B daily to support him with phonics. He has attended a phonics intervention with me in a small group and has recently started partaking in year one phonics boot camp with myself. This is designed to support all children of similar ability to further their phonics knowledge.

In the classroom, I support Child B with his work. During English lessons I have been using post it notes for him to build the words. He can now say the sounds for the words (CV, CVC, CVCC) and build them using the post it notes. Child Bs confidence has grown as he does need as much support with this and does not ask for as much help.

He completed a phonics assessment at the beginning of term 5 and scored 17. This is a significant improvement and with support, he has worked hard to get the result.

Child B also attends a Language Link group I ran and 3 other children using the strategies and knowledge I have been developing. At the beginning of the sessions, he struggled to follow the instructions of good listening and good sitting he would often call out and fidget in his chair or on the carpet.

Child B has completed one Language Link group, consisting of 8 sessions, and is now halfway through the second stage. I have been observing Child B in every session and he is now able to raise his hand if wants to speak rather than calling out. Child B is able to now maintain eye contact when talking to myself or other children and does not fidget in his chair. Child B’s confidence has grown as he is more willing to offer his own answers, views, or opinions, without being prompted.