

# The Deployment and Impact of Support Staff in Schools

Report on findings from a national questionnaire survey of schools, support staff and teachers (Strand 1, Wave 1, 2004)

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# Executive Summary

## 1. Background

This study seeks overall to obtain up to date and reliable data on the deployment and characteristics of support staff, the impact of support staff on pupil outcomes and teacher workloads, and how impact is affected by school management and communication in the school. It involves a large scale survey (Strand 1), followed by a multi method and multi informant approach (Strand 2 and 3). It provides detailed baseline data by which to assess change and progress over time. It will also seek understanding of the processes in schools which lead to effective and ineffective use of support staff. This report presents results from Strand 1 of the project, stemming from the first mail out of the three questionnaires: The Main School Questionnaire (MSQ), the Support Staff Questionnaire (SSQ) and the Teacher Questionnaire (TQ), addressing the situation in schools during 2004.

A number of developments have contributed to the growth in the range and number of support staff in schools. Recently there has been a large investment in increasing levels of support staff (for convenience called support staff in this report). Most recently, *Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: a National Agreement* (the National Agreement) signed in January 2003 between the DfES, the Welsh Assembly Government, local authority employers and the majority of school workforce unions represented a consensus on principles relating to tackling teacher workload, developing support staff roles, and raising standards in schools. Information from the DfES shows that, for the period January 1997 to January 2003, there was a 65% increase in all support staff in English schools.

It is also recognised that there are currently significant gaps in knowledge about many aspects of support staff – their levels of training and qualifications, their recruitment and retention, and on their deployment. Research to date provides only limited information on the impact of support staff in schools, and on the processes in schools through which impact is maximised or inhibited. This study is designed to help fill these gaps.

The two main aims of the project are:

- a. to provide an accurate, systematic and representative **description** of the types of support staff in school, and their characteristics and deployment in schools, and how these change over time
  
- b. to analyse **the impact or effect** of support staff on teaching and learning and management and administration in schools, and how this changes over time.

## 2. Method

The aim of Strand 1 is to provide comprehensive and reliable information on support staff. Strand 1 involves a nationally representative survey of all primary, secondary and special schools in England and Wales. For Wave 1, questionnaires were sent to approximately 40% of the total schools in England and Wales, that is, 10,000 schools. As there are a smaller number of special and secondary school than primary schools, and a smaller number of schools in Wales than in England, a slightly higher proportion of these schools were included in the sample in order to obtain sufficient information on them. This report covers results from the first survey which for the Main School Questionnaire (MSQ) was the summer term 2003/4 and for the Support Staff Questionnaire (SSQ) and Teacher Questionnaire (TQ) the Autumn term 2004/5. Numbers of returned questionnaires for the MSQ were 2,318 (response rate 23%), for the SSQ 2,127 (response rate 41%), and for the TQ 1824 (response rate 20%). There was no evidence that schools returning questionnaires differed in any substantial way from schools that did not. The survey aimed to provide baseline data, to be repeated in 2005/6 and 2007/8. Taken together, the three survey points will provide a systematic

account of basic information on support staff in schools and changes over a key 5 year period (2003-8).

Information collected from Strand 1 aims to provide a description of characteristics and deployment of support staff, including details of all support staff in schools, numbers and type, age, gender, ethnicity, salary levels, experience, qualifications, turnover, hours and duties, deployment in schools, how they support teaching and learning, and training. Information was also collected to provide a detailed account of activities of support staff, and staff perceptions of their work, workloads, job satisfaction and career progression opportunities, and perceptions of the wider school workforce on the way support staff are deployed. A main aim was to provide a new classification or typology of support staff.

The sampling strategy for the SSQ resulted in over-sampling some groups of support staff relative to their prevalence in schools. However, this imbalance was accounted for when summarising the results by weighting them for all staff combined (and those broken down by country and phase of school) by the prevalence of each group of support staff in schools.

### **3. Classification of support staff**

After pilot work and analysis of the MSQ and SSQ data it appeared that support staff in England and Wales could be best classified in terms of seven groups. This was based on multivariate statistical analysis which classified post titles in groups in terms of the degree of commonality in the tasks they performed.

The seven groups were:

1. TA Equivalent (TA, LSA (SEN pupils), nursery nurse, therapist);
2. Pupil Welfare (Connexions personal advisor, education welfare officer, home-school liaison officer, learning mentor, nurse and welfare assistant);
3. Technical and Specialist Staff (ICT network manager, ICT technician, librarian, science technician and technology technician);
4. Other Pupil Support Staff (bilingual support officer, cover supervisor, escort, exam invigilator, language assistant, midday assistant and midday supervisor);
5. Facilities Staff (cleaner, cook, and other catering staff);
6. Administrative Staff (administrator/clerk, bursar, finance officer, office manager, secretary, attendance officer, data manager, examination officer, and PA to the headteacher);
7. Site Staff (caretaker and premises manager).

This classification went beyond previous methods and appeared to be a valid way of grouping support staff. It will be used in the following chapters when presenting results from the MSQ, SSQ and TQ.

### **4. Characteristics of support staff in schools**

#### *Basic details of support staff in schools*

The results showed that of all schools in the sample 16% had 10 or less support staff, 30% had 11-20 support staff, 37% had 21-40, 11% had 41-60, and 6% had 61 or more support staff. There were far more support staff in secondary schools and they had higher support staff Full Time Equivalent (FTE). Support staff numbers and FTE were lower in primary schools, reflecting the larger size of secondary schools. Across all categories of support staff, special schools found it hardest to recruit support staff, while primary schools found it easiest. Estimates of the national FTE figures for each post title showed that post titles in the TA Equivalent category were the most prevalent, especially 'Classroom Assistants' (48,553), 'Learning Support Assistants' (37,687) and 'Teaching Assistants' (32,988). These are followed by 'Administrators/Clerks' (24,945) and 'Caretakers' (18,549).



About a quarter of schools said that they had vacancies for support staff post titles, a third had particular problems of recruitment, and 11% of schools had a particular problem with turnover. Secondary schools had the highest level of vacancies, primary schools least. Primary schools also had more problems with turnover compared to secondary schools and special schools.

Numbers of support staff and support staff FTE were higher in English compared to Welsh schools. Schools in England found recruitment of support staff harder than in Wales, and there were far more vacancies in England than Wales.

The results indicated that TA equivalent support staff were the most frequent category of support staff found in schools, particularly special schools. 'Other pupil support staff' was the next most prevalent category followed by administrative staff. Site staff were the least numerous category of support staff, and schools were less likely to have any pupil welfare and facilities staff, and technicians. TA equivalent staff were again the most common in terms of data on full-time equivalent. Taking the staff numbers and FTE together suggested that TA equivalent staff were the most numerous and worked longer contracted hours, technicians were less numerous but worked relatively long contracted hours, whilst the number of other pupil support staff was high but they worked less contracted hours.

There were most vacancies for other pupil support staff, particularly in secondary schools, followed by TA equivalent staff. There were least vacancies for site staff. Most recruitment problems were found for other pupil support staff. Very few recruitment problems were reported for the other categories of support staff, particularly pupil welfare, administrative, site, technicians and facilities staff. As with recruitment problems, most problems of turnover were reported for other pupil support staff. It is clear from these results that 'other pupil support' staff presented the greatest recruitment and retention challenge for schools.

The results indicated that, for all types of school combined, 71% of schools had a change in their number of support staff since January 2003 (to the time of the survey in 2004). The figure varied by school type, with secondary schools indicating most change and primary schools least.

The most common reason given by schools for a change in support staff numbers was a change in the number of children with Special Educational Needs. Most schools giving this response said it had led to an increase in the numbers of support staff. The second most common reason for the change in support staff numbers were new initiatives (school led), and this always led to an increase in the numbers of support staff. The third most common reason for the change in support staff numbers was changes in budget, though now this was as likely to lead to an increase as a decrease in support staff numbers.

#### *Factors influencing numbers of support staff*

The results suggested that the number of pupils in the school had the strongest and most consistent influence on the number of support staff in each of the seven main categories. In each case, a larger number of full time equivalent pupils was associated with an increased number of support staff.

There were significant differences in support staff numbers between the three school types for all support staff categories, although the size of difference was found to vary depending on the number of pupils at the school. After adjusting for the other variables, including the number of pupils, special schools were found to have the largest numbers of support staff in each category. This no doubt reflects the greater levels of need in these schools, though this will also be reflected in higher levels of funding that will be provided for pupils with special needs. It is interesting, however, that there are higher numbers of all categories of support staff, not just those with a direct role in pupil support. In the case of site staff this might reflect the greater amount of attention required for specialist areas,

e.g., pools, and equipment in the school. There will also be more residential special schools, and this is likely to mean more staff of all categories will be required.

There were found to be significant differences between areas of the country for five of the seven support staff categories. However, there did not appear to be a consistent pattern to the results. Regions tended to have more of some categories of support staff, but less of other categories. There were few differences between rural and urban schools, apart from other “pupil support staff” that were more common in urban schools.

In contrast to the schools’ perception (described above), the statistical analysis showed that the percentage of pupils with SEN, both with and without statements, had little impact on support staff numbers. However, the exception was for TA equivalent staff, who, as might be expected, were more prevalent in schools with a larger proportion of pupils with statements, no doubt reflecting the increased need and funding for such staff.

#### *Factors influencing number of support staff vacancies in schools*

There were differences in the likelihood of a vacancy between school types for most categories of support staff. Only site and other pupil support staff did not show a difference. There were consistently less vacancies in primary schools, with secondary and special schools more likely to have a vacancy. It is possible that these differences were due to an increased number of staff in secondary and special schools compared to primary schools, and hence there being more chance of a vacancy arising. Vacancies in secondary and special schools may also be harder to fill because roles may be more specialised, and expected higher skills.

A higher number of full-time equivalent pupils was associated with a greater likelihood of a vacancy for other pupil support staff, administrative and site staff. This result may also be connected to the greater number of vacancies likely in larger schools, though it is unclear why this should only apply to these three support staff categories.

There was some evidence of increased vacancies for some support staff categories in schools with higher levels of need, considered in a broad way. In the case of TA equivalent and facilities staff there were more vacancies in schools with a higher percentage of pupils with English as an additional language, and in the case of pupil welfare staff and other pupil support staff more vacancies in schools with a higher percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. It is difficult to say on the basis of the data in the survey exactly why this should be the case. The number of EAL pupils will reflect the social context of the schools and the linguistic and educational characteristics of potential support staff. Eligibility for free school meals is an indicator of levels of deprivation. Both number of EAL pupils and eligibility for free school meals are likely to affect the availability of suitable support staff and possibly their willingness to put themselves forward. Here and elsewhere these results will be further explored in the case studies in Strand 2 and also in the two future DISS questionnaire surveys.

There was generally little difference between areas of the country, and no differences were observed between rural and urban schools.

#### *Problems of recruitment and turnover of support staff, and changes in numbers*

Schools with a higher percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals had more recruitment problems, and this is similar to results for vacancies, just considered. There was evidence that a larger number of pupils was associated with a decreased occurrence of recruitment problems. The most frequent response to the open ended question on this referred to the lack of applicants with expertise or skills and experience as the main problem with recruitment.

Primary schools had the least problems with turnover, with little difference between secondary and special schools. There were increased problems for schools with a higher percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals and for schools with a higher percentage of ethnic minority pupils. The most frequent response to the open ended questions referred to the tendency of staff to look for promotion, career development and salary progression elsewhere as the main problem with turnover

Schools with a larger number of pupils were more likely to have experienced a change in support staff numbers. Schools with a higher proportion of pupils with a first language other than English were linked with an increased occurrence of a change in numbers. It is not easy to account for this finding, though it may again reflect the availability of suitable staff in such areas. It should be borne in mind that due to the nature of the statistical analysis used it (and indeed any other similar finding) is not explained by any of the other variables entered into the analysis, e.g., area, FSM or school size.

School type was important, with special schools having the highest occurrence of a change in support staff numbers. This result is interesting, but difficult to account for. It may be connected to the higher numbers of support staff, relative to the number of pupils, and therefore the greater possibility of staff leaving and joining. It may also reflect the fact that special schools have been recently taking on more staff.

#### *Who are the support staff?*

Most support staff were female (89%) with only site staff being mostly male. There were more female support staff in primary and special schools than in secondary schools. Most respondents were aged 36 and over (83%), and almost all classified themselves as of white ethnic background. There was a fairly even balance between those with qualifications above GCSE and those at GCSE level or below. Only 9% of respondents indicated that they had no qualifications, with 15% holding a degree level or higher qualification. There were some differences between support staff groups. Site staff along with other pupil support staff and especially facilities staff had the lowest qualifications. Pupil welfare staff and technicians had the highest level of qualifications.

#### *Nature of support staff contract*

Support staff worked on average 23 hours per week although there was a wide range. The majority of support staff (87%) were on permanent contracts and contracted to work less than 52 weeks a year (78%). Support staff in primary schools had lower contracted hours and were more likely to work less than 52 weeks a year. This may be attributable to several factors. The school day is shorter in primary schools, than in secondary or special schools. Special schools incorporate more planning and other organizational time with their TAs (see TQ and SSQ analyses) so staff may have this built into their contract time. It may also be that the likely greater prevalence of part time posts in primary schools could help explain the overall findings on contracted hours, though this requires further examination. In Wales support staff were less likely to be paid across the whole year.

There were some differences between support staff categories. Staff in the pupil welfare category were least likely to have a permanent contract. Staff in categories associated with less pupil contact appeared to be most likely to have a permanent contract – facilities staff, admin staff and site staff. Site staff were noticeably most likely to be contracted to work 52 weeks per year, while other pupil support staff and TA equivalent staff were more likely to be contracted for less than 52 weeks per year. Other pupil support staff were most likely to be paid term time only.

#### *More on contracts and working arrangements of support staff: job descriptions, appraisal, working more hours than contract*

The majority of support staff (88%) said they had a job description, nearly half (43%) said their work was supervised by a teacher, and about half (47%) of all staff had been appraised in the last 12 months. It was found that half of support staff worked more hours than specified in their contract.

Nearly two thirds of these worked more hours than specified at least once a week. Support staff in special schools were more likely to have a job description, more likely than those in secondary schools to have their work supervised by a teacher, and more likely to have been appraised in the last 12 months. This suggests that special schools are further ahead in terms of these aspects of staff management. Staff in primary schools were the least likely to have been appraised in the last 12 months. Staff in secondary schools were less likely to have a job description and less likely to be supervised by a teacher. There are likely to be several reasons for this last finding. In primary schools, most support staff are classroom based, and more likely to work for specific teachers, for longer periods of time. Staff in special schools were also likely to work closely with their teachers. Conversely, support staff in secondary schools appeared to work less in tandem with individual teachers, but more to an overall plan directed from outside the individual classrooms. This would not, though, account for why secondary school support staff were less likely to have a job description. There were several country differences. Support staff in England were more likely to have a job description and be appraised in the last 12 months and more likely to be paid for additional time.

Site staff and administrative staff were found to be more likely to work more hours than specified in their contracts, while other pupil support staff worked least extra hours. Staff most likely to be paid for extra time were facilities and site staff. Staff least likely to be paid were pupil welfare staff, technicians and TA equivalent staff. Other pupil support staff and especially TA equivalent staff were most likely to have their work supervised by a teacher. Staff most likely to have had an appraisal in the last 12 months were pupil welfare and TA equivalent staff. The staff least likely to have been appraised were facilities staff and other pupil support staff.

#### *Factors influencing support staff wages*

Wages overall were higher in England than Wales and highest on average in secondary schools and lowest in primary schools (the average difference between secondary and primary was about £1.50p per hour). The highest average salaries were paid to pupil welfare staff, technicians and administrative staff, while the lowest salaries were paid to facilities and site staff. Higher salaries (over £15 per hour) were paid to pupil welfare staff, technicians, other pupil support staff, and particularly administrative staff. These support staff groups had a wider range of staff paid at different levels. Some, e.g., senior administrative staff were relatively highly paid. It was noticeable that almost all facilities staff were paid less than £7.50 per hour, and almost all site staff were paid £10 per hour or less.

A number of factors were found to influence the wages of support staff. There were some differences between school types. TA equivalent and welfare staff had highest wages in special schools, perhaps reflecting the greater specialist knowledge required, whilst technicians in secondary schools had higher salaries than those in primary and special schools, again reflecting the greater specialist skills required. School type did not influence the wages of the other categories of support staff.

There was a difference between areas for several support staff categories. Where a difference was found, wages were highest in London, with no consistent effects for the other areas.

Generally staff qualified above GCSE level were paid higher wages than those who were qualified to GCSE level or below. However, there was no effect of qualification level on the wages of TA equivalent, facilities and site staff. These results show that the link between qualifications and wage only applies to some support staff groups. These results are further extended by the finding that female staff had lower wages than their male counterparts for the welfare, technicians and admin staff categories, but there was no difference between males and females for the other categories. This probably reflects the fact that career progression and higher wages are more possible in these groups. Further examination of the data showed that within each of these 3 support staff categories, men and women have significantly different post titles. For the pupil welfare category, males had the highest

paid positions, and this could help explain the difference between men and women. There was a similar situation for technicians, where males occupied the post with the highest wages in this category. The explanation did not hold, however, for the administrative group.

Age was significant in influencing the wages of welfare, technicians and administrative staff, with older staff paid more than younger staff. Once again, these support staff groups seem to have more opportunities for career progression and greater experience, seniority and higher wages are more likely with increasing age.

#### *Support staff required qualifications and previous experience, and training*

Two thirds of support staff did not need specific qualifications and just over half were not required to have previous experience in order to be appointed to their post. Pupil welfare support staff were most likely to need specific qualifications for their post while very few site staff needed specific qualifications. Two thirds of support staff had attended school based INSET in the last two years and half had attended non-school based INSET or other education and training relevant to their post. Only a third had attended education or training leading to a qualification in the previous two years.

There were a number of differences by school type. Support staff in special schools were more likely to have attended school based and non-school based INSET, more likely to have attended other education or training relevant to their posts, and more likely to have attended education and training leading to a qualification in the previous two years. Primary school support staff were least likely to need specific qualifications for their post, and least likely to require previous experience. They were least likely to have attended non-school based INSET. Secondary school support staff were least likely to have attended school based INSET. There were also country differences. Support staff in England were more likely to need previous experience, more likely to have attended school based INSET, non-school based INSET, and any other education or training relevant to their posts, in comparison to support staff in Wales.

Pupil welfare support staff were most likely to need specific qualifications and previous experience for the post while only very few site staff needed specific qualifications. Other pupil support staff and facilities staff were least likely to need previous experience for the post.

TA equivalent staff, pupil welfare and admin staff were more likely to have attended school based INSET, non school based INSET and other courses. Other pupil support staff, facilities, and site staff were the least likely to have attended school based INSET, non school based INSET and other courses. This may be connected to the possible greater likelihood of not being school employees (LA or contractors) and therefore not being included in school training arrangements. TA equivalent and other pupil support staff were the most likely to undertake the three types of training and development activities in their own time and not be paid for attendance. Pupil welfare and TA equivalent staff were more likely to have attended training leading to a qualification, though TA equivalent and also technicians were the most likely to do this during their own unpaid time.

#### *Factors affecting qualifications required by support staff*

Staff who were qualified to a higher standard were more likely to have posts that required qualifications in the case of TA equivalent staff, pupil welfare staff and technicians. Staff qualification level was not found to influence the requirement for qualifications for the other four support staff categories. There were few differences between the three types of school. The exception was for pupil welfare staff, who were most likely to require qualifications in special schools. There were few differences between regions of the country. An exception was for technicians, where those in the North-East were most likely to require qualifications. Staff ethnic group and gender did not have a consistent role in affecting the likelihood of requiring qualifications. Age was only an important factor for pupil welfare staff, with older staff more likely to require qualifications.

## **5. Deployment and views of support staff on their job**

### *Deployment of support staff*

In the SSQ support staff were asked to note which of 91 tasks they undertook in their work. To illustrate differences between the seven support staff groups in terms of their deployment in schools we calculated and then presented the 15 most common tasks. The overall percentage of tasks varied between support staff categories, suggesting a uniformity of activities for site and TA equivalent staff, not apparent in the case of 'other pupil support' staff and facilities staff - suggesting that these support staff groups conduct more diverse tasks. They may also contain more diverse post titles.

### *Nature of support staff roles: supporting pupils and teachers*

Staff in special schools spent more time supporting pupils and teachers than in secondary and primary schools. This to some extent is likely to reflect the higher number of classroom based staff in special schools, though it is also likely to reflect the greater support needed by pupils in special schools. Secondary school support staff were far less likely to support pupils. The low figure for secondary schools in terms of supporting pupils is not accounted for by a high figure for supporting teachers. TA equivalent support staff were most likely to directly support pupils and teachers. Technicians along with administrative staff were the only categories of support staff who spent noticeably more time supporting teachers than pupils.

Only a few factors influenced the time spent supporting pupils for each support staff group. There were no factors that consistently influenced support for pupils across the different groups. The type of school only influenced time that other pupil support staff spent with pupils, with other pupil support staff in special schools spending most time supporting pupils. The time spent did not differ between primary, secondary and special schools for the other six support staff categories. There were no differences between areas of the country for 5 of the 7 support staff categories. However, there were some differences for TA equivalent and other pupil support staff, and for both categories, staff in the North-East spent most time supporting pupils. There were no differences between rural and urban schools. Older pupil welfare and site staff spent less time supporting pupils than younger staff. Age had no effect on the results for the other 5 support staff categories.

The factor which had the greatest effect on the time that staff spent supporting teachers was the number of full-time equivalent pupils. However, there was no consistent effect. In larger schools TA equivalent staff spent less time supporting teachers, whilst technicians, other pupil support staff and site staff spent more time supporting teachers. No other factors examined had a consistent effect upon the time supporting teachers.

There were no differences between areas of the country for 6 of the 7 support staff categories. However, there were some differences for technicians with staff in the North-East and North-West spending most time supporting teachers.

Data from the TQ showed that teachers were most likely to work with TA equivalent support staff, in terms of numbers and time in the week, especially in special schools.

It is not always easy to account for the factors found to influence support for teachers and pupils, reported in this section. It will be possible to re-examine trends in future surveys in order to see how sustained the trends are over time. Possible explanations for these results will also be explored in the case studies conducted in Strand 2 of the project.

### *Teachers and support staff together*

Most teachers said that at the time of the survey (2004) they did not have allocated planning or feedback time with support staff they worked with in the classroom. There was noticeably less

planning and feedback time in secondary schools and most in special schools. The majority of staff (85%) who had planning and feedback time were paid for it. Staff in England were more likely to be paid for planning and feedback time.

The majority of teachers have had no training to help them work with support staff in classrooms, even though 40% were involved in training support staff. Most were not line managers of support staff. Teachers were more likely to be line managers of support staff in special schools and least in secondary schools.

#### *Support staff job satisfaction and views on their job*

In response to the two closed questions asking for support staff to indicate their level of job satisfaction and how much they felt appreciated by schools, they are overwhelmingly positive. TA equivalent and other pupil support staff were the most satisfied with their posts, and facilities staff and technicians the least satisfied. Other pupil support staff were also most likely to feel appreciated by their schools, and technicians and administrative staff the most negative. There were indications of differences between school types: job satisfaction and levels of appreciation were highest in special schools and lowest in secondary schools. However, after allowing for other factors in the multivariate analyses school type differences were not significant. Although the picture is predominantly positive, technicians therefore seemed to be the most negative in terms of not feeling appreciated by the school and in terms of their professional satisfaction, and staff in special schools had the most professional satisfaction and felt most appreciated. There was a suggestion that many categories of support staff felt less appreciated in larger schools. In addition, staff qualified above GCSE level were less satisfied than staff with a lower level of qualification. Older support staff felt more appreciated, and staff from minority ethnic groups felt less appreciated by the school.

In response to an open invitation to give further information on their deployment in their schools, there were responses from 424 support staff, representing 20% of those who returned the questionnaire. Their responses fell into five main categories. The largest category - nearly half of respondents - dealt with their roles, tasks and responsibilities, and most of these were just descriptive, expanding on information given in answer to other questions. But most remaining responses in this section were in some way negative about their roles, tasks and responsibilities. The most common concern was how their workload had become increasingly heavy, in some cases going beyond the tasks set out in their job descriptions. This was followed by ways in which delegation of tasks from teachers to support staff had a negative impact on some; how some felt that their work had suffered as tasks increased in number and variety; and some felt that tasks did not match their competence, either being too simple, boring or too difficult.

The second largest set (17%) expressed respondents' feelings about their professional / job satisfaction. In line with the quantitative results seen above, the majority expressed positive opinions, though there were still 7% of all responses which revealed negative feelings. The largest single category contained responses which use a variety of terms to express how their work makes the respondents feel valued and appreciated. The second set of positive comments expressed the intrinsic qualities of the working experience, rather than the extrinsic benefits derived from other people's reactions. But the remaining responses in this category were all expressions of dissatisfaction, particularly how support staff feel others perceive or treat them.

Another 12% were mostly negative comments about pay and conditions. The most common view was that pay does not match responsibilities. We have looked elsewhere in this report at figures on the numbers of support staff working beyond their contracted hours in order to complete tasks, without being paid for the time spent. Here we see the negative feelings that some have toward this. Some support staff called for a review of pay scales, and a few have complaints over the disparity between their pay and that of teachers.

Another 11% referred to training / qualifications, and the largest single category described support which schools provide for training. However, the remaining categories share a negative view and when combined, outnumber the positive comments. The overall impression is that schools may provide or support training, but support staff feel this does not necessarily lead to increased pay or promotion.

10% of responses referred to management and staff relationships. Three particular aspects were of roughly equal importance to the respondents: satisfaction at the way the school has developed their career, the lack of career structure, and the feelings of exclusion generated by their treatment.

Some differences were found between support staff groups, though low numbers mean caution is required in interpretation. TA equivalent staff and technicians both gave top priority in their comments to the issue of their pay being out of line with their responsibilities, whereas pupil welfare staff and other pupil support staff revealed that feeling valued is the most important point they wanted to make. Administrative staff were alone in giving such a high priority to excessive workload issues.

The comments reveal a number of views about the roles, tasks and responsibilities, which have coincided with the implementation of the National Agreement. It is not possible to say however that these views are directly the result of the National Agreement. Much will depend on the way in which the National Agreement is implemented in individual schools. It will be important to further address these findings with data from the case studies in Strand 2 of the project, in which we examine management practices and reactions to change at school level.

One of the obvious points to emerge, when comparing results from the closed, quantitative questions and open ended answers, is that the former produce a much more positive picture about the support staff experience. There are several points to make here. The relatively low response rate for this open question may mean that those with problems are the most likely to give extra additional written replies. The open ended sample may not therefore be representative of the larger sample. The responses are not exactly comparable because the open question did not specifically ask for responses on the areas covered by the quantitative results. But it may also be that the two sets of responses are not necessarily contradictory. It may be that someone gives a predominantly positive general judgment about job satisfaction, and being valued by the school, and yet they also they have some particular concerns they wish to voice.

## **6. Impact of support staff on pupils and teachers**

### *Impact on routine administrative and clerical tasks*

Overall, most tasks highlighted in the National Agreement were at the time of the survey in 2004 still performed by the teachers, particularly record keeping, filing, classroom display, processing exam results, collating pupil reports, administering work experience, administering examinations, ordering supplies and equipment, stocktaking, cataloguing, preparing equipment and materials, minuting meetings, coordinating and submitting bids, seeking personnel advice, managing pupil data and inputting pupil data. Care is required in interpreting these results as answers to this question may underestimate the impact of support staff in that tasks may still be performed by teachers but this does not mean that they had not passed aspects of these tasks to support staff.

### *Impact of support staff on teachers' job satisfaction, stress and workload*

From the teacher's perspective, support staff had a positive effect on their level of job satisfaction. Over half of them said that there had been a large or slight increase in satisfaction. A third had experienced no change with only 7% experiencing a slight or large decrease. As expected, those support staff who worked more closely in the classroom seemed to have the most effect – especially TA equivalent, followed by technicians – and those with responsibilities out of the classroom like



facilities and site staff least. It seems that support staff who work closely with teachers are most likely to have a large positive effect on teachers' job satisfaction, but can also in a few cases have a large negative effect.

There was a similar positive view about the effect that support staff had in reducing levels of stress. Over half of teachers said that support staff had led to a slight or large decrease in stress. Again support staff with a more direct role in the classroom had the most effect. The types of staff most likely to cause a large decrease in stress was very close to those likely to cause a large increase in job satisfaction. TA equivalent staff and the technicians were again the two categories of staff most likely to reduce stress, whilst facilities staff were the least likely. Very few teachers stated that support staff were responsible for a large increase in their own stress levels. This is very positive, in the sense that despite teachers working with many different support staff, many of them in the very close situation of a classroom, the teachers stress levels are not raised to a large extent by those with whom they work.

Results on reductions in work loads were still positive though less pronounced. Only 46% now said that support staff had led to reduced workload, though this varied a lot between categories of support staff. Administrative staff and technicians had had most effect on workloads, with technicians most likely to have brought about a large decrease. Facilities, site, and other pupil support staff had less effect on workloads. Technicians were consistently cited as being responsible for the improvement in job satisfaction and stress. Administrative staff may not work in situations in which they are particularly likely to impact upon the teachers but they can help reduce teacher workload a great deal. Interestingly, over 10% of support staff were found to have led to slight or in a few cases large increases in workload. Other pupil support staff in particular, followed by TA equivalent and pupil welfare staff, had resulted in a slight or large increase in workloads. This may again reflect difficulties that can arise when working closely with other staff. These results should not be taken to imply that increased workload is inevitable; in Strand 2 of the project it will be possible to look more closely at the nature of management and supervisory arrangements in schools to see how change is being handled. It may also be that increased workload is an initial consequence of new working practices and it will be possible to document this in future surveys conducted for the project.

Teachers in Wales were more likely than teachers in England to say that support staff had led to no change in teacher satisfaction, stress and workload.

#### *Impact of support staff on pupil learning and behaviour*

Teachers felt that support staff had a beneficial effect on pupil learning and behaviour. The main ways that support staff affected learning and behaviour were in terms of:

1. Bringing specialist help to the teacher and into the classroom, e.g., in terms of skills in technology, counselling, careers advice, equipment and resources
2. Affecting pupils' attitudes, e.g., in terms of confidence, motivation, pride in their work and improved social skills
3. Helping pupils' understanding or misconceptions
4. Having a positive impact on the pupils' behaviour, discipline, social skills or behaviour. Fewer than 10% of comments can be seen as less positive in that teachers said that the support staff mentioned had no effect upon behaviour and learning.

#### *Impact of support staff on teaching*

Teachers felt that support staff had benefited their teaching in a number of ways. The largest number of comments were about how the support staff had enabled the teachers to be able to concentrate more on their teaching, allowing them more time to teach and work with other pupils whilst the support staff worked with the SEN pupils. This was followed by comments on the expertise that members of support staff were able to supply to the teachers and the pupils, and the way that they

could be called on to sort out problems or give advice; the way that the quality of their own teaching had improved as a result of the support staff, e.g., through allowing a more varied style of teaching, a faster pace of teaching (because they did not have to spend as much time with individual pupils), and the ability to make teaching more challenging and take more risks; the way that support staff facilitated planning and preparing for lessons, and contributed ideas and help in preparation (teaching assistants, technicians and administration staff were particularly helpful in this area); the important way in which teachers were no longer tied down with such routine tasks as administration work and photocopying, and subsequent ways they were then able to do other things; and finally that the work of the support staff allowed teachers to differentiate the work for more pupils, targeting the pupils who needed help and ensuring that all ability levels were catered for. There were a minority of comments which were negative in their responses, in that the support staff had a negligible effect upon teaching. It is understandable that these comments were mainly about support staff who are likely to have less direct contact with the classroom: i.e., facilities, other pupil support staff, administrative and site staff.

### **7. Headteacher views on changes to the deployment of support staff over the school year 2003/4**

It seems that changes in the deployment of support staff had taken place in the year prior to the survey (in 2004) in virtually all the schools in the sample. Some changes may have predated the National Agreement (2003), though we cannot test this. Tasks identified for reallocation had been removed from teachers during the past year in the majority of schools in the sample. In other schools this had happened already. The responses also showed that there was a difference between schools in the degree to which change had taken place. They were adopting or emphasising particular approaches to the remodelling process and implementation of job evaluation, whilst in others the reform was wholesale and its effects were across all aspects, including job descriptions, post titles, tasks, salaries, hours of work and contracts. In some schools there had been little or no change at all. Perhaps the clearest trends were for differences between the three school types. Secondary schools were more likely to intend to introduce changes, create new posts or appointment of new staff, and initiate a review of all or most posts. The size of schools and the size of their budgets may have provided the headteachers of secondary schools with more flexibility in engaging new staff to fill newly created posts. But the greatest contrast in the responses of the different school types concerns the reallocation of clerical and routine tasks to support staff. Special schools were far less likely to have done this, and this probably reflects existing organisational factors in special schools and the fact that changes were more likely to have already taken place.

One reaction to remodelling the workforce was an initiation of a review of all or most of the support staff roles and their place in the schools' structures. This represents the most comprehensive response to change. However, this was the least common response, taking place in only 6% of schools. At this stage in the remodelling process, therefore, few schools had begun to carry out wholesale reform. One reason for this may be that some schools had already changed the working patterns of teaching and support staff, though this prior change was reported by only a few of the remaining respondents.

However, the detailed answers from headteachers about their work reflected the amount of work they had undertaken, and schools were clearly proud of the work they had done. Some schools had taken on staff roles and deployment in thorough, imaginative and equitable ways. We hope to develop a full description of the kinds of fundamental restructuring taking place in schools in the case studies for Strand 2 of the DISS project (over the school year 2005/6).

There were 1810 responses which indicated the nature of the reallocation of tasks and roles now undertaken by support staff. The reallocation of administrative tasks formed the largest component, being 27% of all responses, compared with only 14% for tasks supporting learning and 2% for other tasks, such as break-time support. The most common administrative tasks reallocated during Phase 1 of the implementation of the National Agreement were photocopying and displays. This emphasis is

not unexpected, as the tasks listed for reallocation were essentially administrative in nature and had virtually nothing to do with the direct support of pupils in classes or elsewhere in the school. This was why these particular tasks were seen as inappropriate for teachers. To that extent, the intention of the National Agreement to tackle teachers' workload, appears to be having success in the area of administrative tasks.

In terms of supporting learning, over the year prior to the survey in 2004 more support staff were teaching groups of pupils and covering whole classes. Secondary school headteachers reported much less use of support staff to take groups, while primary schools are the least likely to allocate cover and take whole classes. These differences probably reflect ways in which existing differences in the working practices and curriculum of the three types of school are affecting the introduction of the National Agreement. Groups are a typical feature of primary class organisation and support staff have commonly been deployed to work with one or more, whilst the teacher works with other pupils. Small numbers of pupils in special school classes, make it likely that the adults will be deployed to support a small group each, at least for part of the time each day. In contrast, the greater use of whole class teaching likely in secondary schools means that groups are less commonly formed and are less available for support staff to work with. A number of other tasks which relate directly to pupil learning and teaching, such as marking books and carrying out pupil assessments, were being taken on by some support staff. A variety of other tasks had been taken over by some support staff, particularly related to pupils' behaviour and their control and supervision when not in lessons.

Some headteachers expressed an opinion about the use of support staff in a direct pedagogical role. Positive reactions far outnumbered the negative in special and secondary schools, but in primary schools negative comments outnumbered positive (though neither were common). Perhaps the most notable result here was the fact that special school headteachers were far more likely to express positive views about support staff taking on pedagogical/learning support roles, compared with primary and secondary heads and this probably reflects existing practice in special schools, where support staff have routinely been involved in supporting learning, particularly on a one-to-one basis. But overall there were few comments on the use of support staff in a direct pedagogical role.

A few headteachers had encountered problems in attempting to introduce changes in support staff deployment: new roles mismatched to present staff, resistance to change amongst present staff, pressures on time and space and the lack of national standards for support staff qualifications and pay-scales. Some headteachers referred to the training needs arising from the National Agreement and more courses were being provided by some of them. Far fewer secondary schools than special and primary referred to the provision of greater training provision or the need for training. This may be because less need for it is perceived or it may not be so necessary in secondary schools.

A few headteachers expressed an opinion about the National Agreement in general. Most of these were classified in the middle of a three point scale, and had some reservations about its conception and / or its implementation so far. At the two ends of the scale there were more positive than negative responses.

Some schools had already begun to implement the next phase of the National Agreement, in advance of the September 2005 introduction date, reporting the provision of planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time and the use of support staff to cover lessons and / or teach groups of pupils. It will be possible to monitor the situation in future surveys for the project.

A number of studies, including reports from the Class Size and Pupil Adult Ratio (CSPAR) project (e.g., Blatchford et al, 2004), have shown how over time, and in ways that were not systematic or uniform, there has been a shift from supporting teachers by helping with practical tasks such as preparing materials, setting up classrooms prior to lessons and clearing up when lessons were

finished, toward more help for teachers by working directly with pupils. Responses from the current survey revealed that this process of role transformation had produced a range of outcomes in the schools represented in the sample. Some had clearly allowed and encouraged teachers to deploy their in-class support staff to directly help pupils, individually as well as in groups. This survey showed that further expansion of their role in supporting of learning was viewed positively by some headteachers but not all. Some schools had drawn a very clear line to separate the role of the teacher from those of support staff and defended the unique status of the teacher against the use of support staff carrying out teaching tasks.

### **8. The future of the DISS project**

The first Strand of the DISS project has provided data that will provide a solid baseline, against which further waves and modes of research will be conducted. It will also act as a backdrop against which the case studies and systematic observations will be carried out; providing a generic yet reliable picture of the employment and deployment of support staff in English and Welsh schools, the roles they play and the attitudes and perceptions they have of their work. Furthermore, we have rudimentary data on the impact of support staff on teachers and their workload.

The case studies and systematic observations will provide much needed information on the reality of this impact, and on the effect of support staff on pupils, and their role in teaching and learning. It is these data that will enrich our view of the growing number of support staff.

The picture over the next three years will change significantly. The need to meet new and existing policy aims, new directives that necessitate innovative solutions, the creation or dissolution of roles, external factors affecting employment, will all vie for attention and are likely to conspire to form a continually moving picture of modern schools and the staff that make them up. The DISS project aims to take regular snapshots of this situation and provide up-to-date, and in some cases, brand new data on support staff and the impact they have in schools and classrooms, and on teachers and pupils.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Summary of project

This study seeks to obtain up to date and reliable data on the deployment and characteristics of support staff, the impact of support staff on pupil outcomes and teacher workloads, and how impact is affected by school management and communication in the school. It involves a large scale survey (Strand 1), followed by a multi method and multi informant approach (Strands 2 and 3). It provides detailed baseline data by which to assess change and progress over time. It will also seek understanding of the processes in schools which lead to the effective use of support staff. This report presents results from Strand 1 of the project, stemming from the first mail out of the three questionnaires: The Main School Questionnaire (MSQ), the Support Staff Questionnaire (SSQ) and the Teacher Questionnaire (TQ). The MSQ was sent out in the summer term 2004, and the SSQ and TQ in the Autumn term 2004.

## 1.2 Introduction to the project

A number of developments have contributed to the growth in the range and number of support staff in schools (Howlett, 1999). These include greater freedoms concerning school budgets for heads and governors, arising out of the 1988 Education Reform Act and Local Management of Schools (LMS). The new focus on special educational needs reflected in the 1994 Code of Practice, and delegation of funding for SEN, was accompanied by increased provision of learning support assistants for pupils with statements of special educational needs. The introduction of the national literacy and numeracy strategies has also made more formal the role of teaching assistants in support of these initiatives.

Recently there has been a large investment in increasing levels of support staff (for convenience we use this term in the report, unless referring to previous work where a different term is used, e.g., Learning Support Assistant, Teaching Assistant or Classroom Assistant) in schools. The Government in its 1998 and 2001 Green Papers set out its intention to increase substantially the number of trained teaching assistants in primary and secondary schools, and between 1999 and 2002 the Government made available £350 million through LEAs to recruit an additional 20,000 full-time equivalent teaching assistants.

### 1.2.1 Remodelling of the school workforce (School Workforce Reform)

In January 2003, the Government – along with local Government employers and the majority of school workforce unions - signed *Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: a National Agreement*. The National Agreement set out a number of measures designed to continue to raise pupil standards, tackle teacher workload including a concerted attack on unnecessary paperwork and bureaucracy, and review support staff roles.

To help take forward and implement the provisions of the National Agreement, a ‘Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group’ (WAMG) - including all the signatories to the National Agreement – was set up. The WAMG has met regularly since January 2003 working on a detailed and varied agenda, and has worked with a variety of stakeholders – including Governors’ organisations – on this and the development of advice and guidance documents. To support schools and local authorities (LA) in the ‘remodelling’ process, the National Remodelling Team (NRT) was established with a ‘remodelling adviser’ in each LA, backed up by a network of regional advisers. In LAs local WAMGs help with local level ‘remodelling’ and decision-making.

### 1.2.2 Tackling teacher workload through changes to the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD)

The National Agreement set out three phases of reform of the STPCD, taking place in September 2003, September 2004 and September 2005.

In September 2003, amendments were made to the STPCD which meant that from that date:

- teachers could no longer routinely be required to carry out administrative and clerical tasks (Annex 5 to Section 2 of the STPCD sets out a list of 21 such tasks but this is not exhaustive);
- all teachers and headteachers should enjoy a reasonable work/life balance; and
- those with leadership and management responsibilities must be given a reasonable allocation of time in which to carry out their duties.

Since September 2004 there has been an annual limit of 38 hours on the time that teachers can be expected to spend covering for absent colleagues.

And finally, with effect from September 2005 teachers were:

- guaranteed at least 10% of their timetabled teaching time for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA); and
- no longer required to invigilate external examinations and tests.

Headteachers, with effect from September 2005, were also now entitled to a reasonable amount of dedicated headship time.

The changes made to teachers' conditions of work set out in STPCD were statutory and schools have had to implement these. The NRT and WAMG have provided a detailed range of advice and guidance, including tailored workshops, on PPA implementation strategies during the 2004/05 academic year.

### 1.2.3 Review of support staff roles

Whilst the terms and conditions of employment and deployment of support staff in schools is primarily a matter for the employer (whether the school's governing body or the LA) to decide, WAMG has developed detailed guidance on what might be expected of two new support staff roles (although schools and support staff themselves are not forced to take these on):

- cover supervisor; and
- higher level teaching assistant (HLTA);

and how such staff should be deployed. It should be noted that specific arrangements exist for Wales.

The guidance was intended to help schools make informed decisions about their staffing structures, not least in relation to how tasks no longer to be carried out by teachers could be discharged. The guidance worked in parallel with the NJC job profiles and guidance on fixed term working, and training and development published in October 2003.

The National Agreement also outlined a number of other support staff roles which schools might want to consider as part of the remodelling agenda. These included:

- assigning the administrative and clerical tasks which teachers no longer carry out to support staff,
- engaging support staff to act as “personal assistants” to teachers;
- employing additional technical support staff – including in information and communications technology (ICT); and
- developing enhanced roles for support staff in the guidance and supervision of pupils.

The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) is now responsible for providing schools with the best information, guidance and support they need to realise the full potential of their workforce. Specifically, the TDA is responsible for overseeing the training and development of all school staff.

Although the three phases of compulsory statutory changes to the STPCD have now taken place and many schools have made changes to how they operate, remodelling is seen as part of a much wider and ongoing process of modernisation in schools – for example, schools have had to implement new staffing structures in response to the Education (Review of Staffing Structure) (England) Regulations 2005 (SI 2005 No. 1032). These Regulations require the staffing structures of all maintained schools and pupil referral units in England to have been reviewed by the end of 2005, and that any resulting changes to schools' staffing arrangements be implemented in full by the end of 2008.

#### 1.2.4 Increased numbers of support staff in schools

Information from the DfES shows that these developments have been accompanied by a huge increase in numbers of support staff in schools. Over the period January 1997 to January 2003, there was a dramatic 65% increase in all support staff in English schools (figures for Wales were not available at the time of writing). There has been a 106% increase in Teaching Assistants, including support for special educational needs; a 29% increase in administration staff (despite a slight decline in school secretaries); a 42% increase in technical staff; and a 48% increase in other support staff including medical staff. Latest figures from the DfES show that in January 2005 there were 268,600 support staff<sup>1</sup> supporting England's 431,900 teachers<sup>2</sup>, the vast majority of which – 148,500 – are employed as TAs (DfES, 2005)<sup>3</sup>. Overall full-time equivalent (FTE) support staff numbers have increased by 42,900 since January 2003, when the National Agreement was signed. This figure represents 26,100 more TAs; 8,400 more administrative staff; and 3,700 more technicians.

It is estimated that at the beginning of the 2005/06 school year, more than 4,000 HLTA were in place at English schools (TTA, 2005). The TTA (now the Training and Development Agency for Schools - TDA) anticipated that more than 18,000 support staff would be trained and/or assessed to secure HLTA status by April 2006, backed by LEA funding, with more to follow in the 2006/07 financial year. The National Assembly for Wales is close to completing a pilot scheme as part of the WAMG partnership, with around 130 support staff from 20 Welsh LEAs currently involved.

Teaching Assistants (TAs) are employed in a variety of functions in support of teachers (DfES, 2004). Although what TAs do specifically varies from school to school, in the main they support individual pupils, some with special educational needs, and/or support a whole class or small group(s) within a class, particularly with literacy and numeracy (DfES, 2004).

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<sup>1</sup> Full-time equivalent excludes support staff at nursery schools and premises and catering staff

<sup>2</sup> Qualified teachers only in the maintained sector, full-time equivalent

<sup>3</sup> Includes HLTAs, nursery nurses, nursery assistants, literacy and numeracy SS, and any other non-teaching staff regularly employed to support teachers in the classroom, except for SEN and minority ethnic pupils support staff

It is recognised that there are currently significant gaps in knowledge about many aspects of support staff employment, such as their levels of training and qualifications, their recruitment and retention, and their deployment. Research to date provides only limited information on the impact of support staff in schools, and on the processes in schools through which impact is maximised or inhibited. This study is designed to help fill these gaps.

### **1.3 Aims**

The two main aims of the project are:

1. To provide an accurate, systematic and representative *description* of the types of support staff in schools, and their characteristics and deployment in schools, and how these change over time;
2. To analyse the *impact* or effect of support staff on teaching and learning and management and administration in schools, and how this changes over time.

#### 1.3.1 Specific research questions

##### a. *Description of support staff in schools and changes over time*

Specific research areas addressed by the first main research aim, are:

1. The characteristics of support staff in terms of, for example, their age, gender, ethnicity, pay, experience, hours worked, qualification levels and job specific training undertaken;
2. The deployment of support staff, including the tasks they undertake, how their work is organised, planned and managed and how they support teaching and learning;
3. The recruitment, retention, turnover and career progression of support staff – particularly whether there are difficulties in relation to certain geographical areas or certain types of staff, despite an apparently buoyant market in the country as a whole; and the reasons for any such difficulties;
4. Support staff perceptions of their work, including workload, job satisfaction and career progression opportunities;
5. Perceptions of the roles of support staff among the wider school workforce, whether these are changing and the extent to which this is reflected in the way support staff are deployed, managed and trained (including the extent to which line managers or teachers are involved in effective coaching); and
6. Analysis of any changes over time in the areas set out above – characteristics, deployment, impact, recruitment, retention and perceptions of the roles of support staff.

##### b. *Impact or effect of support staff in schools*

The second main aim goes further and seeks to establish the effect of support staff on pupil outcomes and teacher workloads, and ways that impact is connected to school organisation. Specifically it addresses:



7. Whether and how impact differs among different types of support staff and whether this is related to training, qualifications and experience, and the way they are managed and deployed;
8. The impact of support staff on teachers' work – including how teachers spend their time and their workload (including teachers' perception of their own workload and how stressful they find their jobs);
9. The impact of support staff on pupil outcomes – both quantitative and qualitative, including behaviour, motivation to learn and key stage outcomes.

### 1.3.2 Strand 1: survey of support staff in schools in England and Wales

The aim of Strand 1 is to provide comprehensive and reliable information on support staff in schools in England and Wales. It involves a large scale survey in order to obtain baseline data, to be repeated at two yearly intervals – 2005/6 and 2007/8. This report covers results from the first survey which for the Main School Questionnaire (MSQ) was the summer term 2003/4 and for the Support Staff Questionnaire (SSQ) and Teacher Questionnaire (TQ) the Autumn term 2004/5. It can be seen that these three survey questionnaires were sent out at the end of the first phase of the National Agreement (see introduction above). Taken together, the three biennial survey points will provide a systematic account of basic information on support staff in schools and changes over a key 5 year period (2003-8).

Information collected from Strand 1 aims to address research questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. A main area covered is characteristics and deployment of support staff, including details of all support staff in schools, numbers and type, age, gender, ethnicity, salary levels, experience, qualifications, turnover, hours and duties, deployment in schools, how they support teaching and learning, and training. Exact details are given below when results are presented. Information was also collected to provide a detailed account of activities of support staff, and staff perceptions of their work, workloads, job satisfaction and career progression opportunities, and perceptions of the wider school workforce on the way support staff are deployed. A main aim was to provide a classification or typology of support staff.

The information provided by the Strand 1 surveys are the basis for study of differences between sectors (primary, secondary and special), types of support staff, and geographical areas and school characteristics (e.g., size, type, levels of need). Information from subsequent surveys will provide the basis of an analysis of changes over time. Some information to be used in assessing the impact of support staff comes from Strand 1, e.g., in terms of the effect of type of support staff, and their experience, qualifications and training, on teacher workloads, job satisfaction, teaching, and pupil learning and behaviour (as revealed in the teacher questionnaires - see below), but most analyses on the impact of support staff will be conducted in the second strand of the project.

## **2. Methodology for strand 1**

Strand 1 involves the design and mailing out of questionnaires to three different groups of respondents.

### **2.1 Main School Questionnaire (MSQ).**

This collected basic information on support staff in schools, such as numbers of support staff, ease of recruitment, vacancies, problems with turnover and recruitment, changes in support staff since January 2003, and reasons for changes in numbers of support staff. It was addressed to the headteacher, though experience with previous surveys suggested that much could be completed by senior teaching or administrative staff. The design of the questionnaire was based on schedules developed in previous studies (e.g. Blatchford et al, 2004).

The MSQ, like the other two questionnaires, was carefully piloted through several versions. This included a small scale mail out to a random sample of schools. Though answers were valuable in re-framing some questions, it was found that there was a low response rate. This was the main reason why it was decided to send out more questionnaires than originally planned in the main mail out.

#### 2.1.1 Sample sizes

This Strand involved a nationally representative survey of all primary, secondary and special schools in England and Wales. Based on experiences with the pilot survey and previous research, in order to achieve a 10% sample, questionnaires were sent to approximately 40% of the total schools in England and Wales. The sample consisted of 10,000 schools. As there are a smaller number of special and secondary school than primary schools, and a smaller number of schools in Wales than in England, a slightly higher proportion of these schools were included in the sample in order to obtain sufficient information on them. Within each phase of school, and each country, a random number generator was used to select a random sample of schools. Numbers of school taking part in the MSQ is shown in Table 1.

(Note: in this report selected tables and figures are presented. Complete results supporting all sections in this report can be found in an Appendix available from the DfES, and this also includes a description of the statistical analyses used.)

Table 1. Numbers of schools taking part in the MSQ

Country	School Type	Questionnaires Sent	Questionnaires Returned	Response Rate
Eng & Wales	All schools	10,000	2,318	23%
	Primary	6,232	1,534	25%
	Secondary	2,726	504	18%
	Special	1,042	279	27%
England	All schools	8,732	1,979	23%
	Primary	5,232	1,268	24%
	Secondary	2,500	440	18%
	Special	1,000	271	27%
Wales	All schools	1,268	338	27%
	Primary	1,000	266	27%
	Secondary	226	64	28%
	Special	42	8	19%

## 2.2 Support Staff Questionnaire (SSQ)

A questionnaire for support staff was sent to a sample of survey schools. The aim of the SSQ was to collect information from support staff about gender, age, ethnic background, whether a Welsh speaker, qualifications, hours contracted, wage, nature of contract, e.g., termly vs. yearly, employer, whether they had a job description, who was their line manager, whether supervised by a teacher, whether they had been appraised in the last 12 months, whether required to work more hours than contract specifies, and whether paid, the nature of tasks/activities done during extra hours, how they heard about their current post, whether qualifications were needed for the post, whether Welsh was needed, whether previous experience was needed, years experience in the role, whether they had attended school based in-service education, non school based in-service education, any other education/training, and education/training leading to qualification. They were also asked how much time they spent directly supporting pupils and how much time spent directly supporting teachers. A main section asked about the tasks and activities done for their post. Finally they were asked about their levels of satisfaction with their job, and how much they felt the school appreciated their work.

Latest figures at the time of preparing the research design suggested that there were around 7 full-time equivalent support staff in primary schools, 17 in secondary schools, and 20 in special schools. We estimated that a minimum of four questionnaires per school would be likely to be needed to cover main categories of support staff. The questionnaires built on those used in a previous survey (Blatchford et al, 2004), though the sample was widened to include all types of support staff.

This questionnaire aimed to get information from a wide range of support staff. One option would have been to send the questionnaire to schools and get them to pick the support staff to fill in the questionnaire. Experience has shown that such a strategy would have provided a lot of information on a small number of support staff post titles (e.g. teaching assistants), but insufficient information on many other post titles. It would not therefore have provided information across the full range of support staff roles. The MSQ provided information on the exact support staff working in each school and was therefore used to target specific post titles at each school. In this way it was possible to obtain a spread of responses from different support staff types.

The aim was to obtain information from around 50 staff with each post title. A 25% response rate was assumed, and so the questionnaire was distributed to up to 200 support staff in each category. There were less than 200 schools with some post titles, and so they were all sent questionnaires. If there were more than 200 schools with a post title, the 200 schools included in the sample were randomly selected. This sampling strategy resulted in over-sampling some groups of support staff relative to their prevalence in schools. However, this imbalance was accounted for when summarising the results by weighting the results for all staff combined (and those broken down by country and phase of school) by the prevalence of each group of support staff in schools.

As with the MSQ, the questionnaire was carefully piloted, with 300 questionnaires sent out to 100 different schools. Of these, 77 questionnaires were returned from 38 schools, representing a response rate of 26%. After further revisions 5201 questionnaires were sent out in the main survey to 1887 schools. 2112 support staff from 991 schools returned completed questionnaires, which represents a response rate of 41%. This is a relatively high response rate for postal questionnaires.

A summary of the schools in the SSQ sample is shown in Table 2.

*Table 2. Numbers of schools in the SSQ sample*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Schools in Sample</b>	<b>Responding Schools</b>	<b>% schools responding</b>
Wales	262	109	42%
England	1625	882	54%

A full summary of the number of questionnaires sent out and returned, by country, phase of school, and support staff category is shown in Table 3.

*Table 3. Numbers of questionnaires in SSQ sample*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Questionnaires Sent</b>	<b>Questionnaires Returned</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>
All staff	5,201	2,127	41%
England	4,596	1,919	42%
Wales	605	203	34%
Primary	2,132	791	37%
Secondary	2,289	1,031	45%
Special	780	300	38%
TA equivalent	988	578	58%
Pupil Welfare	887	234	26%
Technicians	800	260	33%
Other Pupil Support	866	195	23%
Facilities	373	86	23%
Administration	1,087	513	47%
Site staff	200	60	30%

### 2.3 Teacher Questionnaire (TQ)

A further questionnaire was sent to a sample of teachers. This questionnaire included information on whether teachers and support staff have allocated planning time, feedback time, other time together, whether they were paid for this time, whether this time was within school session, other time before or after school sessions when the support staff were paid, how decisions about activities when working with SEN pupils in class were made (decided as a result of school policy, SENCO, or teacher decisions?), whether teachers had training to help work with support staff, whether involved in training support staff, and if so the type of training, and whether they were line manager for any members of support staff.

They were also asked about the impact of support staff on pupils and themselves in terms of administrative and routine tasks performed by teachers last year, and still performed by them this year, and tasks now being carried out by other staff. They were asked for the post title of those now performing each task previously carried out by teacher. Finally they were asked open questions about how support staff had affected pupil learning and behaviour, how affected teaching, and closed questions asking how support staff had affected the teacher's level of job satisfaction, stress and workload. Teachers' views on support staff in their classrooms addressed research questions 5 and 8.

In order to be clear how answers related to specific categories of support staff, and to also ensure that we had information on as wide a range of support staff as possible (not just TA equivalent support staff), teachers were first asked to indicate which of a list of support staff post titles they had worked with in the last week, and then asked questions about how many of each staff they worked with and for how much time. Teachers were then requested to answer further questions about support staff by referring to two different categories of support staff who supported them last week.

The TQ was carefully piloted in the same way as the other two questionnaires. 200 questionnaires were sent out in the pilot sample, 2 questionnaires to 100 different schools. Of these, 28 were returned, which represents a response rate of 14%. This was disappointing but we hoped the response rate would be increased in the main survey.

Questionnaires were sent to four teachers in each school who responded to the MSQ (via the contact person appointed by the school). For primary schools, two questionnaires were sent to teachers from each key stage. For secondary schools, questionnaires were sent to two core subject teachers (English, maths or science) and two non-core subject teachers (all other subjects). For special schools, questionnaires were sent to any four teachers. Information on specific teachers working within each school were unknown, so the decision as to exactly which teachers received the questionnaires was made by each individual school. The sample consisted of 9268 questionnaires distributed to 2317 schools.

A summary of the questionnaires received and response rates is shown in Table 4. It can be seen that the response rate was 20%, better than the pilot, but less than the MSQ and especially the SSQ. It is difficult to compare response rates exactly (e.g., because we cannot be sure that all teachers in a school received the questionnaire) but it does seem that support staff were more willing to complete the questionnaire than teachers.

Part of the TQ was therefore designed so that teachers chose support staff from two different categories. However, teachers tended to give information about TA equivalent staff in preference to other support staff categories, and so this group was over-represented in the sample compared to other groups. To counter this imbalance, the results of these questions for all staff combined (and those broken down by country and phase of school) were weighted by the prevalence of each group of support staff in schools.

*Table 4. Numbers of questionnaires in TQ sample*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Questionnaires Sent</b>	<b>Questionnaires Returned</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>
All schools	9,272	1,824	20%
England	7,916	1,578	20%
Wales	1,352	226	17%
Primary	6,136	1,158	19%
Secondary	2,016	434	22%
Special	1,116	212	19%

### **3. Classification of support staff**

There are now many different kinds of support staff. Some have direct roles in the classroom, such as teaching assistants and nursery nurses; some with specialist input to child learning, such as music and creative arts specialists; some with administrative roles that can directly affect a teacher's time in the classroom; and some with roles which have little direct bearing on classroom learning, such as caretakers. A main point to arise out of previous studies is that there are a large number of terms applied to different support staff, and sometimes different terms applied to staff with the same role. There are also a number of new types of support staff beginning to work in schools, such as Higher Level Teaching Assistants, business managers, and bursars. One first basic aim of the research was therefore to document and then find a method for categorising the current situation. This would then provide a framework for the research and its findings.

Previous methods for classifying different types of support staff exist but they differ from each other in a number of respects and we did not assume in advance the validity of one over another. The National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) – which includes local Government employers' organisations and support staff unions - devised one such system with four main categories of support staff and indicative tasks appropriate to each ('School Support Staff - the way forward' – from the website of the Employers' Organisation for local Government). The DfES, in its reporting of annually collected data, reported above, uses the main headings 'Teaching Assistants', 'Administrative Staff', 'Technicians', and 'Other Staff'. In an earlier study, Mortimore and Mortimore (1992) identified eight categories: finance, administration, site and services, in-class support, pupil support, IT/resources, Librarian/Resources, and Technician. For most purposes these roles are then classified into either curriculum support or management and administration. Three main types were specified in the invitation to tender for this project issued by the DfES: supporting teaching and learning; administration and organisation; and behaviour and guidance.

#### **3.1 Approach**

A first main task for the research was therefore the development of a new method for categorizing all support staff currently in primary, secondary and special schools in England and Wales, built on a fundamental account of support staff post titles in combination with an analysis of support staff tasks and activities. Our strategy for documenting and categorizing support staff involved several steps.

#### **3.2 Pilot study of Main School Questionnaire**

The first step was to obtain from schools a complete list of support staff currently working in schools. We did this through the MSQ - a national postal survey of primary, secondary and special schools in England and Wales (see 2.1 for details). Given the lack of certainty about existing broad categorizations of support staff, it was felt that it was best to take one step back and first develop a systematic description of the individual post titles currently operating. A general categorisation of titles could then be developed, confident that they reflected the current situation. This might confirm, for example, the four category system used by the DfES, but it was felt safer not to assume that this or any other classification was correct on a priori grounds because it would then pre-empt any later re-classification. We therefore drew up a list of possible titles, drawing from various sources, including our visits to schools, and then refined and added to these on the basis of responses in the pilot work. The most frequent 44 were then used in the Main School Questionnaire (MSQ).

### **3.3 Main School Questionnaire (MSQ)**

Schools were asked to indicate the number and full-time equivalent of each of the post titles. It was stressed that we wanted them to answer in terms of post titles used in their school and not base it on the job description or the tasks undertaken. They were also invited to add additional job titles if they were not covered by the list. To avoid any confusion they were told that by support staff we meant all paid staff who worked in the school whether employed by the school, local authority or other body but not teachers, volunteers or other unpaid staff. We also asked schools to code as more than one post situations in which support staff had more than one contract, e.g., a teaching assistant who also had a separate contract or post as a midday supervisor, clerk or exam invigilator.

To our surprise there were 915 post titles in all – far exceeding the number on our original list. This shows very clearly the huge range of support staff in schools today and perhaps the autonomy that schools/LAs have in employment matters. This at first faced us with a problem concerning whether to amend the original list. However, further analyses showed that these additional post titles were relatively rare, and we excluded those that occurred in less than 1% of all schools, leaving the 47 key roles we used for further analysis.

In addition to the individual post titles, the 47 post titles were then combined together into a smaller number of categories for ease of the presentation of results. This was meant to be only an initial categorisation of post titles and it was anticipated that data from the Support Staff Questionnaire would be used to further review these categories. The initial grouping was based on the local Government association list and a summary can be found in Appendix 1. (As noted above, a separate document with all the appendices is available from the DfES.) There were four broad categories – pupil support, administration, technicians/specialists and site staff – with a sub set of pupil support titles that were equivalent to TAs, in the sense of most obviously working in classrooms and often with pupils. This provisional categorization of support staff was used in early analyses, but, as we now show, later analyses of data from the SSQ work resulted in a more refined and valid categorisation of support staff.

### **3.4 Support Staff Questionnaire (SSQ)**

As described in the method section, the questionnaire to support staff was sent to a representative sample of main categories of support staff. A main objective of the SSQ was to go beyond the classification of support staff from the MSQ by providing an analysis of the tasks undertaken by post titles. One way in which one could test the validity of a priori grouping would be to see whether similarly grouped post titles really did perform similar tasks and activities. If not, then there would be grounds for allocating them with other post titles that performed similar activities. It would also help settle the many discussions we had about whether or not certain post titles should be allocated to one general category or another. An example of this was cover supervisors – some members of the Steering Group felt this should be considered as a pupil support category while others were not so sure that their role was primarily to provide support. The analysis of the SSQ data was therefore directed at a categorisation based not on job title but on the tasks undertaken.

In the SSQ, respondents were given a list of 91 tasks and asked to tick which of the tasks they carried out in their posts. There was space for a maximum of two posts, and they were asked to give the post title for each. In this way we could link tasks and post titles. If they carried out any tasks not listed they were asked to add them in a space at the end of the list. The list of tasks was based on the NJC system described above, and refined after a pilot postal questionnaire survey. These 91 tasks were then included in the full version of the SSQ (Autumn 2004).



An inspection of the SSQ results indicated a low number of responses for some post titles, which would mean a relatively small amount of information on which to base the analysis. As a result, it was decided to omit some post titles from the analysis. Post titles that were omitted were Art/Design Technician, Business Manager, Literacy Worker, Music Specialist and Receptionist. In addition, some post titles were combined together for the purposes of analysis. This included grouping together classroom assistants and teaching assistants, and also ICT technicians and other ICT staff. Due to a large number of teaching assistant responses, these were separated into three categories, those working in primary, secondary and special schools.

The responses were classified into groups using the statistical method of ‘cluster analysis’. The aim of this method is to classify post titles into groups or ‘clusters’. Those post titles allocated to the same group were more alike in terms of activities undertaken, than those allocated to different groups. It is therefore the statistical analysis that determines the clusters rather than the researchers. However, although based on sophisticated statistical analysis, it is possible to arrive at different solutions, and different numbers of clusters. Care is therefore needed in deciding on the number of clusters that best represents differences between support staff groups.

The first analysis produced four support staff groups, as in the initial classification. However, an inspection of the four groups suggested that some disparate post titles were combined together, that one might not expect to be similar. For example, midday assistants and science technicians appeared in the same category. When a seven cluster solution was tried, the composition of the groups was more logical and found to work best. The groupings of support staff and the constituent post titles are given in Table 5 and in Appendix 2.

*Table 5. Groups of support staff post titles (seven group solution)*

<b>Groups of support staff post titles</b>			
<b><u>TA Equivalent</u></b>	<b><u>Pupil Welfare</u></b>	<b><u>Technicians</u></b>	<b><u>Other Pupil Supp.</u></b>
Higher level TA	Connexions Advisor	ICT manager	Bilingual Support
LSA (SEN pupils)	Education welfare	ICT technician	Cover Supervisor
Nursery Nurse	Home liaison	Librarian	Escort
Therapist	Learning Mentor	Science Technician	Exam Invigilator
TA – primary	Nurse	Technology Tech.	Lang Assistant
TA – secondary	Welfare Assistant		Midday Assistant
TA – special			Midday Supervisor
<b><u>Facilities</u></b>	<b><u>Administrative</u></b>	<b><u>Site</u></b>	
Cleaner	Administrator	Caretaker	
Cook	Bursar	Premises Manager	
Other catering	Finance Officer		
	Office Manager		
	Secretary		
	Attendance Officer		
	Data Manager		
	Examinations Officer		
	PA to Head		

The first group has the post titles higher level TA, LSA (SEN pupils), nursery nurse, therapist, TA – primary, TA – secondary and TA – special. These post titles can be easily identified as a TA equivalent group. A second group consisted of the post titles Connexions personal advisor, education

welfare officer, home-school liaison officer, learning mentor, nurse and welfare assistant. These titles appear to be concerned with the welfare of the pupils. The third group consisted of the post titles ICT network manager, ICT technician, librarian, science technician and technology technician. This group contains technical and specialist staff. A fourth group contained the following post titles, bilingual support officer, cover supervisor, escort, exam invigilator, language assistant, midday assistant and midday supervisor. This slightly disparate group appears to consist of those staff who were not directly involved with pupils in the classroom or their welfare, but who have a pupil support role. The fifth group consisted of the post titles cleaner, cook, and other catering staff. These could be considered as facilities staff. A sixth group contained the post titles administrator/clerk, bursar, finance officer, office manager, secretary, attendance officer, data manager, examination officer, and PA to the Headteacher. This group reflects the school administration staff involved with the day to day running of the school. The final group consists of only two post titles, caretaker and premises manager. The analysis indicated that these two post titles – site staff - perform vastly different tasks to all the other post titles, but are similar to each other.

There are several points to note when comparing these groupings with the initial categorization. It is noticeable that while the initial method had only one pupil support group, with a TA equivalent sub set, the cluster analysis provides three groups – ‘TA equivalent’, ‘pupil welfare’ and ‘other pupil support’. The new TA equivalent category contains less post titles than were created for the initial grouping. Some of the post titles are now allocated to the other two pupil support groups, and this appears to better allocate people to the same group on the basis of the tasks actually undertaken.

Cover supervisors are not grouped with TA equivalents as thought by some, or with the administration staff. In fact they were grouped with post titles that are involved with pupil supervision. Similarly, the posts of language assistant and bilingual support were also grouped with the pupil supervision staff.

The technicians sub group is similar to the earlier scheme. Interestingly, ICT network manager is regarded as a technician rather than an administrator, as was previously thought. The provisional classification had ICT network manager grouped as an administrative post. However, all results suggested that they should be grouped together with the other technicians.

The Cluster Analysis produced an administration group which has fewer titles than the original grouping but now more obviously groups together those with similar tasks. It does not include those with a supervisor role, e.g., exam invigilators.

A strong finding is that caretakers and premises managers, the site staff, perform separate tasks to cleaners and catering staff, and no results (either those presented in this report, or using variations on the methods, results of which not presented here) grouped these post titles together. Therefore, the previous classification which grouped these categories together is not supported by the data from the SSQ.

### **Key findings from Chapter 3**

- After pilot work and analysis of the MQ and SSQ data it appeared that support staff in England and Wales could be best classified in terms of seven groups. This was based on multivariate statistical analysis which classified post titles in groups in terms of the degree of commonality in the tasks they performed. The seven groups were:
  1. TA equivalent (TA, LSA (SEN pupils), nursery nurse, therapist)
  2. Pupil welfare (Connexions personal advisor, education welfare officer, home-school liaison officer, learning mentor, nurse and welfare assistant)

3. Technical and specialist staff (ICT network manager, ICT technician, librarian, science technician and technology technician)
4. Other pupil support (bilingual support officer, cover supervisor, escort, exam invigilator, language assistant, midday assistant and midday supervisor)
5. Facilities staff (cleaner, cook, and other catering staff)
6. Administrative staff (administrator/clerk, bursar, finance officer, office manager, secretary, attendance officer, data manager, examination officer, and PA to the headteacher)
7. Site staff (caretaker and premises manager)

## 4. Characteristics of support staff in schools

### 4.1. Basic details of support staff in schools

This section examines results on main questions from the MSQ. The aim was to provide a comprehensive account of the situation at the time of the survey (2004) on numbers of support staff, number of full-time equivalent support staff, vacancies for support staff, recruitment problems, turnover problems, and changes in numbers of support staff. The section is organised in two parts. In the first we give descriptive information on all staff, differences between England and Wales, differences between school types (primary, secondary and special), and differences between the seven support staff groups, identified in the previous section. In the second part we describe an analysis of background factors affecting these variables.

#### 4.1.1 *Number of staff*

Table 6 gives the number (and percentage) of schools employing support staff. It was found that 16% of all schools responding had 10 or less support staff, 30% had 11-20 support staff, 37% had 21-40, 11% had 41-60, and 6% had 61 or more staff (see Table 6 and Appendix 4). There were far more secondary schools with 41 or more staff, reflecting their larger size. More than half of primary schools had 20 or less support staff. Numbers of support staff were higher in schools in England compared to Wales.

*Table 6. Total number of support staff*

Category	≤ 10 Staff N (%)	11–20 Staff N (%)	21–40 Staff N (%)	41–60 Staff N (%)	61+ Staff N (%)
All staff	360 (16%)	663 (30%)	844 (37%)	255 (11%)	128 (6%)
England	251 (13%)	544 (28%)	764 (40%)	238 (12%)	122 (6%)
Wales	109 (33%)	119 (36%)	80 (24%)	16 (5%)	6 (2%)
Primary	320 (22%)	580 (39%)	525 (36%)	46 (3%)	6 (<1%)
Secondary	6 (1%)	31 (6%)	204 (41%)	163 (33%)	93 (19%)
Special	34 (12%)	52 (19%)	115 (42%)	45 (16%)	29 (11%)

Results for the seven support staff categories (see Table 7 and Appendix 5) showed that TA equivalent staff were the most frequently found in schools, particularly in special schools, where over 50% of such schools had over 11 TA equivalent staff. Other pupil support staff were the next most prevalent category, when all schools were considered together (47% had 6 or more), followed by administrative staff. Site staff were the least numerous category of support staff (with very few schools with 6 or over site staff). Schools were most likely not to have any pupil welfare staff, technicians and facilities staff (62%, 49% and 43% respectively). In the case of pupil welfare staff and technicians, this is explained by the lack of these staff in primary schools.

*Table 7. Numbers of staff for support staff categories – England and Wales combined*  
(Figures are the number (%) of schools employing staff in each support staff category)

<b>STAFF CATEGORY &amp; PHASE OF SCHOOL</b>	<b>NO STAFF N (%)</b>	<b>1-5 STAFF N (%)</b>	<b>6-10 STAFF N (%)</b>	<b>11-20 STAFF N (%)</b>	<b>21+ STAFF N (%)</b>
<b>TA Equivalent</b>					
All types	260 (11%)	856 (37%)	613 (26%)	444 (19%)	145 (6%)
Primary only	178 (12%)	671 (44%)	419 (27%)	232 (15%)	34 (2%)
Secondary only	41 (8%)	143 (28%)	146 (29%)	138 (27%)	36 (7%)
Special only	41 (15%)	41 (15%)	48 (17%)	74 (26%)	75 (27%)
<b>Pupil Welfare</b>					
All types	1444 (62%)	795 (34%)	71 (3%)	8 (<1%)	0 (0%)
Primary only	1171 (76%)	349 (23%)	12 (1%)	2 (<1%)	0 (0%)
Secondary only	145 (29%)	306 (61%)	49 (10%)	4 (<1%)	0 (0%)
Special only	128 (46%)	139 (50%)	10 (4%)	2 (<1%)	0 (0%)
<b>Technicians</b>					
All types	1135 (49%)	867 (37%)	259 (11%)	56 (2%)	1 (<1%)
Primary only	983 (64%)	551 (36%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Secondary only	9 (2%)	183 (36%)	257 (51%)	55 (11%)	0 (0%)
Special only	143 (51%)	132 (47%)	2 (<1%)	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)
<b>Other Pupil Support</b>					
All types	323 (14%)	894 (39%)	736 (32%)	290 (12%)	75 (3%)
Primary only	172 (11%)	642 (42%)	558 (36%)	155 (10%)	7 (<1%)
Secondary only	48 (9%)	175 (35%)	133 (26%)	101 (20%)	47 (9%)
Special only	103 (37%)	76 (27%)	45 (16%)	34 (12%)	21 (8%)
<b>Facilities</b>					
All types	998 (43%)	1061 (46%)	166 (7%)	76 (3%)	17 (<1%)
Primary only	683 (44%)	796 (52%)	50 (3%)	5 (<1%)	0 (0%)
Secondary only	216 (43%)	101 (20%)	101 (20%)	69 (14%)	17 (3%)
Special only	99 (35%)	164 (59%)	14 (5%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)
<b>Administrative</b>					
All types	64 (3%)	1847 (80%)	283 (12%)	120 (5%)	4 (<1%)
Primary only	49 (3%)	1476 (96%)	8 (<1%)	1 (<1%)	0 (0%)
Secondary only	5 (1%)	123 (24%)	256 (51%)	116 (23%)	4 (1%)
Special only	10 (4%)	247 (88%)	19 (7%)	3 (1%)	0 (0%)
<b>Site</b>					
All types	314 (14%)	1991 (86%)	12 (<1%)	1 (<1%)	0 (0%)
Primary only	234 (15%)	1299 (85%)	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	0 (0%)
Secondary only	39 (8%)	454 (90%)	11 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Special only	41 (15%)	237 (85%)	1 (<1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The figures for site staff, shown in Table 7, are reflected in results on individual post titles that make up the overall support staff category (in the interests of space, given their number, full results on individual post titles are not shown). These showed that the most common category of support staff present in schools (in terms of number of schools) were caretakers (i.e., one site staff category) who

were present in over 80% of schools. Caretakers were also the most prevalent when both primary and secondary schools were considered separately. These were followed by administrators/clerks, one of the administrative staff post titles, who were present in over 75% of schools, and were the most prevalent group in special schools. Midday supervisors were present in over 60%, whilst classroom assistants were also frequently present in schools, and occurred in over 50% of the surveyed schools.

As might be expected, given their larger size, for the majority of support staff categories, the numbers of support staff in individual secondary schools were found to be higher than for primary schools.

#### 4.1.2 Number of full-time equivalent staff

The summaries of the number of full-time (or FTE) equivalent staff are shown in Table 8a and Appendix 6. All figures are the number of full-time equivalent staff (only applicable for schools with members of staff; for the purposes of this analysis it was thought that schools with no members of support staff in a given category would make interpretation more difficult and so they were excluded from analysis).

Table 8a. Numbers of full time equivalent for England and Wales combined

CATEGORY	≤ 5 FTE N (%)	5.1–10 FTE N (%)	10.1–20 FTE N (%)	20.1–40 FTE N (%)	>40 FTE N (%)
All staff	475 (23%)	541 (26%)	575 (28%)	406 (19%)	94 (4%)
England	370 (21%)	473 (26%)	502 (28%)	377 (21%)	86 (5%)
Wales	105 (37%)	68 (24%)	73 (26%)	29 (10%)	7 (3%)
Primary	429 (22%)	475 (35%)	375 (28%)	75 (6%)	3 (<1%)
Secondary	18 (4%)	28 (6%)	116 (24%)	248 (52%)	68 (14%)
Special	28 (11%)	38 (15%)	84 (33%)	83 (32%)	22 (9%)

In about a quarter of all schools (23%) there are 5 or less full time equivalent support staff, and a similar percentage (26%) have between 5 and 10 full-time FTE. At the other extreme, 23% of schools have more than 20 FTE. Differences between school types are very similar to numbers of staff, with secondary schools having the highest FTE and primary schools the lowest FTE. As with numbers of support staff, support staff FTE were higher in schools in England compared to schools in Wales.

The numbers of full-time equivalent staff for each of the seven main categories of support staff are shown in Appendix 7. Results showed that TA equivalent were again the most common with 83% with 3 or over FTE staff and 20% with 11+ FTE. There was an interesting difference between numbers and FTE for technicians and other pupil support staff. In contrast to numbers of support staff, technicians were the next most frequent category with 44% with 3 or more FTE technicians. Conversely, other pupil support staff were the second most numerous support staff, but only the fifth most numerous in terms of FTE (only 24% 3+ FTE). Administrative staff were the next most common (33% with 3+ FTE). Site staff had least FTE of all support staff categories, no doubt reflecting their low numbers in schools. Taking the staff numbers and FTE together suggests that TA equivalent staff were the most numerous and had longer contracted hours, technicians were less numerous but worked relatively long contracted hours and numbers of other pupil support staff were high but they worked less contracted hours.

For individual post titles (results not shown), teaching assistants and classroom assistants were the most prevalent, with a median number of around 3 full time equivalent members of staff in each school that employed this category of support staff.

In order to get an indication of the situation nationally, estimates, for each of the post titles in the MSQ survey, of the number of FTE staff in England and Wales are shown in Table 8b. The estimates were based on multiplying the average FTE for each type of school by the latest figures on the numbers of schools in each type, separately for England and Wales. As would be expected from the results above, it can be seen that post titles in the TA Equivalent category are the most prevalent, especially ‘Classroom Assistants’, ‘Learning Support Assistants’ and ‘Teaching Assistants’. These are followed by ‘Administrators/Clerks’ and ‘Caretakers’.

*Table 8b. Number of full-time equivalent staff for each post title in England and Wales*

<b>Support Staff Category</b>	<b>Post Title</b>	<b>Number FTE - England</b>	<b>Number FTE - Wales</b>
TA Equivalent	Classroom Assistant	48,553	2,898
	Higher Level Teaching Assistant	1,957	36
	Learning Support Assistant (for SEN pupils)	37,687	2,127
	Nursery Nurse	13,157	2,113
	Therapist	785	118
	Teaching Assistant	32,988	326
	Pupil Welfare	Connexions Personal Adviser	1,017
Education Welfare Officer		924	133
Home-School Liaison Officer		801	42
Learning Mentor		4,539	24
Nurse		953	114
Welfare Assistant		1,491	6
Technicians		ICT Network Manager	2,488
	ICT Technician	5,892	197
	ICT Support Staff – Other	398	13
	Librarian	3,414	152
	Science Technician	7,023	373
	Technology Technician	2,601	121
Other Pupil Support	Bilingual Support Assistant	1,553	156
	Cover Supervisor	978	69
	Escort	860	13
	Exam Invigilator	909	41
	Language Assistant	778	50
	Midday Assistant	11,363	467
	Midday Supervisor	13,455	1,145
Facilities	Catering Staff – Other	7,280	705

	Cleaner	2,908	104
	Cook	7,798	1,280
Administrative	Administrator / Clerk	24,945	1,594
	Attendance Office	1,589	83
	Bursar	3,547	115
	Data Manager / Analyst	875	22
	Examinations Officer	1,294	67
	Finance Officer	3,955	101
	Office Manager	2,533	109
	Personal Assistant to Head	2,291	79
		School Secretary	6,760
Site	Caretaker	18,549	1,391
	Premises Manager	2,702	66
Other Post titles (not categorised)	Art &/or Design Technician	1,599	45
	Creative Arts Specialist	185	3
	Learning Manager	238	4
	Literacy Worker	336	26
	Music Specialist	1,061	88
	Receptionist	605	11
	Reprographics Technician	395	7

#### 4.1.3 Vacancies

Schools were asked to note if they had any vacancies for individual post titles. Initially the results were combined for the general support staff categories. Over all schools about a quarter of them (29%) said that they had vacancies for support staff post titles (see Table 9 and Appendix 8). Secondary schools were most likely to have a vacancy (49%), and primary schools the least likely (22%). There was far more likelihood of a vacancy in England than Wales (31% vs. 19%).

*Table 9. Number of schools with at least one support staff vacancy and with particular recruitment and turnover problems, for all schools and by country and type of school*

School type	Country	Support staff vacancy	Recruitment Problems	Turnover problems
		Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
All	England & Wales	680 (29%)	731 (32%)	255 (11%)
	England only	615 (31%)	597 (31%)	219 (11%)
	Wales only	64 (19%)	134 (40%)	36 (11%)
Primary	England & Wales	334 (22%)	490 (33%)	142 (10%)



	England only	290 (23%)	382 (31%)	115 (9%)
	Wales only	44 (17%)	108 (41%)	27 (11%)
Secondary	England & Wales	247 (49%)	146 (30%)	74 (15%)
	England only	229 (52%)	123 (29%)	66 (15%)
	Wales only	18 (28%)	23 (37%)	8 (13%)
Special	England & Wales	98 (35%)	95 (35%)	39 (14%)
	England only	96 (35%)	92 (35%)	38 (14%)
	Wales only	2 (25%)	3 (38%)	1 (17%)

Table 10. Number of schools with at least one support staff vacancy and with particular recruitment and turnover problems, by support staff category

	<b>Support staff vacancy</b>	<b>Recruitment Problems</b>	<b>Turnover problems</b>
	<b>Number (%)</b>	<b>Number (%)</b>	<b>Number (%)</b>
<b>TA Equivalent</b>			
All types	251 (12%)	132 (6%)	53 (3%)
Primary only	121 (9%)	89 (7%)	21 (2%)
Secondary only	82 (18%)	15 (3%)	26 (6%)
Special only	47 (20%)	28 (12%)	6 (3%)
<b>Pupil Welfare</b>			
All types	46 (5%)	8 (1%)	3 (<1%)
Primary only	13 (4%)	3 (1%)	2 (1%)
Secondary only	26 (7%)	2 (1%)	1 (<1%)
Special only	7 (5%)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)
<b>Technicians</b>			
All types	73 (6%)	40 (3%)	11 (1%)
Primary only	5 (1%)	3 (1%)	0 (0%)
Secondary only	64 (13%)	37 (7%)	10 (2%)
Special only	4 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
<b>Other Pupil Support</b>			
All types	296 (15%)	302 (15%)	91 (5%)
Primary only	166 (12%)	225 (16%)	70 (5%)
Secondary only	103 (23%)	59 (13%)	16 (4%)
Special only	27 (15%)	18 (10%)	5 (3%)
<b>Facilities</b>			
All types	62 (5%)	54 (4%)	24 (2%)
Primary only	22 (3%)	33 (4%)	12 (1%)
Secondary only	28 (10%)	18 (6%)	12 (4%)
Special only	12 (7%)	3 (2%)	1 (1%)

<b>Administrative</b>			
All types	121 (5%)	38 (2%)	7 (<1%)
Primary only	37 (3%)	23 (2%)	2 (<1%)
Secondary only	62 (12%)	11 (2%)	5 (1%)
Special only	22 (8%)	4 (2%)	0 (0%)
<b>Site</b>			
All types	47 (2%)	64 (3%)	24 (1%)
Primary only	23 (2%)	49 (4%)	12 (1%)
Secondary only	17 (4%)	12 (3%)	11 (2%)
Special only	7 (3%)	3 (1%)	1 (<1%)

Results for support staff categories (see Table 10 and Appendix 9) showed that vacancies were most common for ‘other pupil support’ staff (15% of schools responding), particularly in secondary schools (23% vs. 12% for primary and 15% for special schools) followed by TA equivalent (12%), though there were more in secondary and special schools. Vacancies were least likely for site staff, occurring in only 2% of schools. There was more likelihood of a vacancy for technicians, other pupil support staff, and administrative staff in secondary schools in comparison to primary and special schools. (Schools were included in this analysis only if they had support staff from a particular category – so schools without a technician would not have been included when considering vacancies.) Nevertheless, these results may be affected by the fact that secondary schools are likely to have more staff in these three categories and therefore are more likely to have a vacancy for them.

The results for specific post titles (not shown) indicated that support staff categories with high rates of vacancies included cleaners (20% of schools), midday assistants (18% of schools), cover supervisors (17%), and midday supervisors (14%). There were reasonably high rates of vacancies for teaching assistants (13% of schools), learning support assistants for pupils with special educational needs (12%), and classroom assistants (11%)

#### 4.1.4 Recruitment problems

Respondents were asked to say whether overall they had particular problems with recruitment of support staff and to then identify which post titles. Overall, 32% of schools had particular problems (see Table 9 and Appendix 10). There was little difference in recruitment problems between schools of different types. However problems with recruitment were slightly more prevalent in Wales than in England (this might be related to difficulties in recruiting staff able to speak Welsh, though as we see below, results from the SSQ showed that only 18% of support staff in Wales held a post that required them to speak Welsh).

Table 10 (and Appendix 11) show results for support staff categories. Recruitment problems were most likely for ‘other pupil support’ staff. Very few recruitment problems were reported for the other categories of support staff, particularly pupil welfare, administrative, site, technicians and facilities staff. It is clear from these results that ‘other pupil support’ staff presented the greatest recruitment and retention challenge for schools.

When specific post titles were examined, there were found to be particular problems in the recruitment of cleaners, with 25% of schools with cleaners found to have a problem. There were also some problems with midday assistants (15% of schools) and midday supervisors (16%).

#### 4.1.5 Turnover problems

Overall, 11% of schools had a particular problem with turnover (see Table 9 and Appendix 12). The results indicated that there was a lower percentage of primary schools that had particular problems with turnover (10% of schools noting a problem) compared to secondary schools (15%) and special schools (14%). The prevalence of schools noting a problem with turnover was similar for schools in England and Wales.

Analysis of the support staff categories are shown in Table 10 and Appendix 11. As with recruitment problems, turnover problems were most frequently reported for 'other pupil support' staff.

There were few problems with turnover of support staff for specific post titles, and for the majority of support staff categories the percentage of schools noting a problem was 1% or less. The category with the greatest turnover problem was cleaners, where 10% of schools with cleaners noted a problem. The next most frequent categories were midday supervisors and midday assistants, with 5% of schools noting turnover problems.

#### 4.1.6 Change in number of support staff

The results, summarised in Appendix 13, indicated that, for all types of school combined, 71% of schools had a change in their number of support staff between January 2003 and the summer term 2004. (Information on whether this represented an increase or decrease in support staff was not collected for the overall figure but was explored in relation to reasons for any change – see next paragraph.) The figure varied by school type, with 88% of secondary schools indicating a change, compared to only 66% of primary schools. There was little difference in the response between England and Wales, although change was found to be slightly more common in schools in England compared to Wales.

We do not know Reasons for change in support staff numbers are shown in Appendix 14. The results indicated that a change in the number of pupils with special educational needs was the most common reason for the change in support staff numbers. This response was given by 46% of schools that indicated a change in the numbers of support staff. Of the schools giving this response, 84% indicated that this had led to an increase in the numbers of support staff.

The second most common reason for the change in support staff numbers were new initiatives (school led), a response given by 37% of schools. Of the schools giving this response, 99% indicated that this had led to an increase in the numbers of support staff.

The third most common reason for the change in support staff numbers was changes in budget, a response given by 33% of schools. Of the schools giving this response, 53% indicated that this had led to an increase in the numbers of support staff, whilst 47% indicated that this had led to a decrease in support staff numbers.

### **4.2 Factors influencing numbers of support staff, vacancies, problems with recruitment, problems with turnover and changes in numbers of support staff.**

#### 4.2.1 Methods

The aim of the analyses so far has been to examine differences between the seven support staff categories and comparisons between the three types of schools (primary, secondary and special schools), and countries (England and Wales). The next step was to examine other factors influencing

numbers of support staff, vacancies, problems with recruitment, problems with turnover and changes in numbers of support staff.

School characteristics were obtained from national data bases (Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) and Edubase). Comparable national data were not available for schools in Wales and so results of the analyses apply only to schools in England.

The school characteristics examined were as follows:

- School type – primary, secondary or special
- Number full-time equivalent (FTE) pupils
- % of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)
- % of pupils with special needs (SEN) and with statements
- % of pupils with special needs (SEN), but without statements
- % of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)
- % of pupils from ethnic minority groups (i.e., from any ethnic group other than that classified as white)
- School setting – rural or urban
- Area of the country

We examined the effects of these school characteristics on the number of support staff and support staff vacancies, separately for each support staff category, while effects on problems with recruitment, problems with turnover and change in number of support staff we examined for the school as a whole.

The advantage of the sophisticated statistical analyses conducted here is that when considering factors influencing support staff vacancies, recruitment, wages etc, they are not explained by the other factors also entered into the analysis (and listed above). This is because the statistical analysis considers the effect of each, having taking into account, or controlling for, the effect of other variables.

#### 4.2.2 Factors influencing numbers of support staff

In this section, only the main statistically significant findings are reported. A full description of the statistical methods is given in Appendix 122. The full results are shown in Appendices 16-22.

The results showed that the number of pupils in the school had the strongest and most consistent influence on the number of support staff in each of the seven main categories. In each case, a larger number of full time equivalent pupils was associated with an increased number of support staff.

There were significant differences in support staff numbers between the three school types for all support staff categories, although the size of difference was found to vary depending on the number of pupils at the school. After adjusting for the other variables, including the number of pupils, special schools were found to have the largest numbers of support staff in each category. This no doubt reflects the greater levels of need in these schools, though this will also be reflected in higher levels of funding that will be provided for pupils with special needs. It is interesting, however, that there are higher numbers of all categories of support staff, not just those with a direct role in pupil support. In the case of site staff this might reflect the greater amount of attention required for specialist areas, e.g., pools, and equipment in the school. There will also be more residential special schools, and this is likely to mean more staff of all categories will be required.

There were significant differences between areas of the country for five of the seven support staff categories. However, there did not appear to be a consistent pattern to the results. Regions tended to

have more of some categories of support staff, but less of other categories. There were few differences between rural and urban schools, apart from 'other pupil support' staff who were more common in urban schools.

The percentage of pupils with SEN, both with and without statements, had little impact upon support staff numbers. The exception was for TA equivalent staff, who were more prevalent in schools with a larger proportion of pupils with statements, no doubt reflecting the increased need and funding for such staff.

#### 4.2.3 Factors influencing number of support staff vacancies in schools

In this section we examine factors influencing whether schools had a vacancy within each of the seven support staff categories. A summary of the statistical methods is given in Appendix 123. Results for each category are shown in Appendices 23 – 29.

There were differences in the likelihood of a vacancy between school types for most categories of support staff. Only site and 'other pupil support' staff did not show a difference. There were consistently less primary schools with vacancies; secondary and special schools were more likely to have a vacancy. It is possible that these differences were due to an increased number of staff in secondary and special schools compared to primary schools, and hence there being more chance of a vacancy arising. Vacancies in secondary and special schools may also be harder to fill because roles may be more specialised, and expected skills higher.

A higher number of full-time equivalent pupils was associated with a greater likelihood of a vacancy for other pupil support, administrative and site staff. This result may also be connected to the greater number of vacancies likely in larger schools, though it is unclear why this should only apply to these three support staff categories.

There was some evidence of increased vacancies for some support staff categories in schools with higher levels of need, considered in a broad way. In the case of TA equivalent and facilities staff there were more vacancies in schools with a higher percentage of pupils with English as an additional language, and in the case of pupil welfare staff and other pupil support staff more vacancies in schools with a higher percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. It is difficult to say on the basis of the data in the survey exactly why this should be the case, though it might reflect the lack of availability of suitable staff (e.g., those who speak English), mentioned in the open ended questions. The number of EAL pupils will reflect the social context of the schools and the linguistic and educational characteristics of potential support staff. Eligibility for free school meals is an indicator of levels of poverty or low income. Both number of EAL pupils and eligibility for free school meals are likely to affect the availability of suitable support staff and possibly their willingness to put themselves forward. Here and elsewhere these results will be further explored in the case studies in Strand 2 and also in the two future questionnaire survey points.

There was generally little difference between areas of the country, and no differences were observed between rural and urban schools.

#### 4.2.4 Factors influencing problems of recruitment and turnover of support staff, and changes in numbers

A multivariate analysis was performed to examine the joint effect of the school characteristics on each of the three outcomes, and it is these results which are reported here. A description of the statistical methods is given in Appendix 124.

#### 4.2.4.1 Factors influencing problems with recruitment

A summary of the final model is in Appendix 30.

The results indicated the influence of the number of pupils, and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, on recruitment problems. An increase in numbers of pupils resulted in turnover problems decreasing. Schools with a higher percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) were more likely to have recruitment problems than those with a lower percentage of FSM pupils.

#### *Open ended question concerning problems with recruitment*

It was possible to address these quantitative data through an analysis of responses to the open ended question in the MSQ on recruitment problems faced by schools. This highlighted 12 issues which either created recruitment difficulties with specific posts, or recruitment difficulties in general for all support staff. These are listed in full in Appendix 31. Most respondents were concerned about the lack of applicants with expertise or skills and experience (22% of responses), and a lack of applicants who were suitably qualified for the posts (15%). Another 15% of respondents said that the poor terms and conditions they could offer was a factor in problems with recruitment. This included the number of hours on offer, split shifts, the lack of career progression, and temporary and short term contracts. A further 12% of respondents specifically cited the low salary on offer as a factor, and this was followed in frequency of mention by references to the location of the school being a problem for some (10%). Also mentioned, though less frequently, were the lack of applicants for posts and the poor attitude of applicants who applied (5%), the high turnover of staff resulting in a constant recruitment problem (3%), the nature of the work being unattractive to possible applicants (3%) and the lack of funds to recruit or retain staff or offer training to newly recruited staff (3%). There is more discussion of these and allied findings in Chapter 8.

#### 4.2.4.2 Factors influencing problems with turnover

The second set of analyses looked at the effect of the school characteristics on the occurrence of turnover problems. The final regression model is summarised in Appendix 32.

The relationship between the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) and problems with turnover varied for the three school types. For primary and secondary schools there was a positive relationship between the percentage of pupils eligible for FSM and the likelihood of turnover problems, meaning that schools with more families in financial need had more problems with staff turnover. For special schools there was also an increased turnover problem for schools with a very high percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, which is therefore consistent with primary and secondary schools, and suggests difficulties with turnover are more likely in schools in areas of greater need. But there was also a relationship between a very low percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals and turnover problems. It is difficult to account for this latter relationship.

The difference between school types varied depending on the percentage of pupils eligible for FSM. For schools with an average percentage of FSM pupils, there was a significant difference between school types. Secondary and special schools had the greatest problems with turnover, with the odds of turnover problems being around 85% higher than in primary schools.

Schools with a higher percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups had more turnover problems.

#### *Open ended question concerning problems with turnover*

As with problems of recruitment there was an open ended question in the MSQ allowing respondents to say more about problems with turnover. Analysis of responses to the open ended question on turnover problems faced by schools resulted in 15 themes which summarized the concerns expressed by schools. These are listed in full in Appendix 33. Most respondents (apart from those who gave no details) were concerned that staff looked for promotion, career development and salary progression elsewhere (17% of respondents). To this category might be added a further 2% of respondents who said that staff have been promoted or progressed to other posts within the school. These most frequent answers were followed by reference to pay levels being insufficient to retain good staff and attract potential applicants who may be in receipt of benefits (14%). The unattractive hours of work for some posts (midday supervisors for example) was cited as a factor by 10% of respondents, and this was followed in frequency by the nature of the job itself not being attractive enough (7%), the nature of the contract (e.g., that it was temporary, short-term or term-time only) and other conditions of service (7%), the nature of the recruited staff themselves results in more turnover (6%), the lack of commitment or absences of staff (4%), and the school is known as a high turnover location (3%). Other explanations given representing just 2% of respondents each were: staff expectations do not match the reality of the post, staff employed are of poor quality, the nature of the work no longer suits needs of family life, and there is a shortage of the skills required for the post.

Results from the last two sections suggest that problems of recruitment and turnover are broadly attributable to the conditions of employment, as expressed in pay and contracts, the lack of suitably qualified or skilled staff, and (no doubt connected to these two explanations) the likelihood of seeking career progression elsewhere.

#### 4.2.4.3 Factors influencing changes in support staff numbers

The joint effect of the school characteristics upon the change in support staff numbers was examined in a multivariate analysis. The results are summarised in Appendix 34.

After adjusting for the effects of other school characteristics, there was a significant effect of school type, number of full-time equivalent (FTE) pupils, and the percentage of pupils with English as additional language (EAL). Schools with a larger percentage of pupils with English as an additional language had a higher occurrence of support staff changes. It is not easy to account for this finding, though it may again reflect the availability of suitable staff in such areas. It should be remembered that due to the nature of the statistical analysis used it (and indeed any other similar finding) is not explained by any of the other variables entered into the analysis, e.g., area, FSM or school size.

Special schools were found to have the highest likelihood of a change in support staff numbers. The odds of a change in staff numbers was over 80% higher than in primary schools. This result is interesting, but also difficult to account for. It may be connected to the higher numbers of support staff, relative to the number of pupils, and therefore the greater possibility of staff leaving and joining. It may also reflect the fact that special schools have been recently taking on more staff.

### **4.3. Characteristics of support staff – characteristics, contracts, work arrangements, qualifications and experience, and line management**

#### 4.3.1 Statistical analyses

In this section a number of results are presented on characteristics, deployment and professional satisfaction of support staff taken for the most part from the SSQ. General results for the whole sample are presented but also results are broken down in terms of comparisons of school type, England and Wales, and category of support staff.

Support staff were asked to complete information for up to two posts they may have held in the school. In the event we found that 14% of staff filled out information for more than one post title. Assuming that this is an accurate indicator, then we can say that this number of support staff have more than one role.

#### 4.3.2 Characteristics of support staff

Table 11. Support staff gender and age

	Female Support Staff Number (%)	Age of support staff		
		Under 36 Number (%)	36 to 50 Number (%)	Over 50 Number (%)
All staff (*)	1842 (89%)	338 (17%)	1103 (52%)	575 (31%)
England(*)	1663 (89%)	309 (16%)	990 (52%)	519 (31%)
Wales(*)	174 (91%)	28 (19%)	108 (55%)	56 (26%)
Primary(*)	732 (93%)	113 (15%)	433 (53%)	203 (30%)
Secondary(*)	847 (83%)	157 (17%)	523 (51%)	295 (32%)
Special(*)	258 (91%)	67 (20%)	142 (48%)	77 (33%)
TA equivalent	560 (98%)	117 (21%)	328 (59%)	109 (20%)
Pupil Welfare	206 (88%)	50 (22%)	134 (60%)	39 (18%)
Technicians	177 (68%)	47 (21%)	121 (48%)	82 (33%)
Oth Pup Supp	183 (94%)	32 (17%)	84 (45%)	71 (38%)
Facilities	82 (95%)	7 (8%)	41 (49%)	36 (43%)
Admin	461 (90%)	50 (11%)	267 (55%)	165 (34%)
Site staff	13 (22%)	4 (7%)	28 (48%)	26 (45%)

(\*) % values weighted by prevalence of each support staff category in schools

First we describe basic descriptive information on the support staff in the study. Table 11 gives details on gender and age of support staff. Results for all staff, England and Wales, and school type were weighted to allow for the fact that the prevalence of each support staff category in the sample did not reflect the prevalence of each support staff category in schools. Weights were calculated separately for country and for school type. As seen in Table 11 the vast majority of respondents (89%) were female, though there were more female support staff in primary (93%) and special (91%) than in secondary schools (83%). Only site staff were more likely to be male (78%), though a relatively high number (32%) of technicians were male. Table 11 also shows that most respondents were aged 36 and over (83%). Further information is provided in Appendix 35 to 39. Results in Appendix 36 show that almost all (95%) respondents classified themselves as of white ethnic background. Appendix 38 shows that only 16% of support staff in Wales said that they were fluent in Welsh; most said that they were not Welsh speakers (69%), and a further 14% said they spoke some Welsh.



Figure 1. Highest qualification of support staff, for all staff and by country and school type

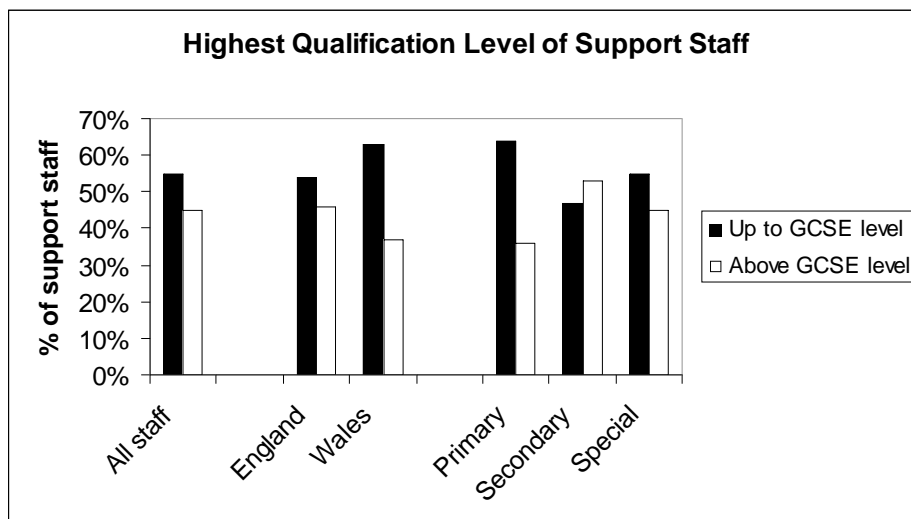
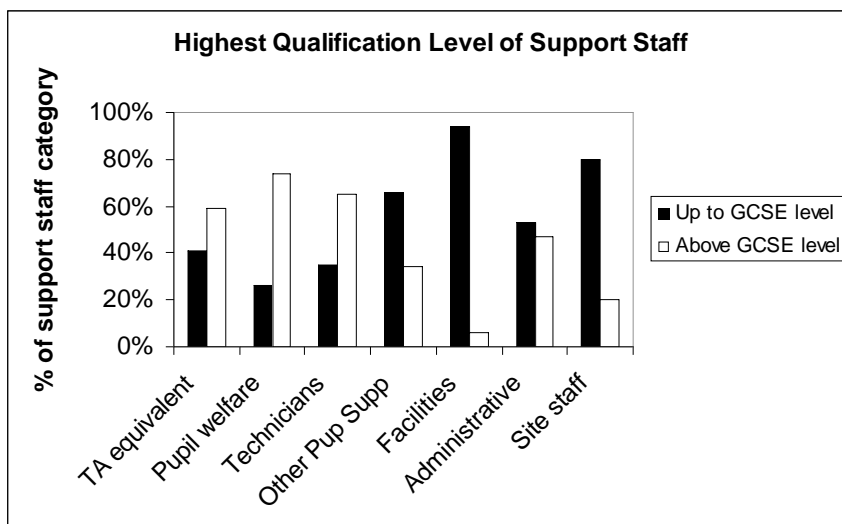


Figure 2. Highest qualification of support staff, by support staff category



The qualifications of support staff were classified in terms of the highest level obtained (see Figure 1 and 2; full results are in Appendix 39). Fig. 1 shows that slightly less had qualifications above GCSE level (45%) as had qualifications at GCSE level or lower (55%). Results in Appendix 39 show that only 9% of respondents indicated that they had no qualifications, with 15% holding a degree level or higher qualification. There were some differences between support staff groups. Figure 2 shows that other pupil support, site and especially facilities staff had the lowest level of qualifications (66%, 80% and 94% respectively had GCSE or lower) while technicians and especially pupil welfare staff had the highest level of qualifications (65% and 74% respectively had qualifications above GCSE).

#### 4.3.3 Nature of support staff contract

Information on the nature of support staff contracts are shown in Table 12 and full details in Appendices 40-43. Support staff were asked to say for each post held how many hours a week they were contracted to work. Support staff worked an average of 23 hours per week although there was a wide range. We calculated that 23% of support staff worked full time, defined in terms of 35 or more hours per week (after weighting by prevalence of support staff category).

Table 12. Characteristics of support staff working practices: Number of hours of work per week, contract type, contracted weeks per year and payment of salary

	<b>Hours worked per week</b>	<b>Permanent contract</b>	<b>Contracted to work 52 wks</b>	<b>Salary paid all year round</b>
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Number (%)</b>	<b>Number (%)</b>	<b>Number (%)</b>
All staff(*)	23.0	1809 (87%)	379 (22%)	1743 (85%)
England(*)	22.9	1647 (87%)	344 (22%)	1586 (85%)
Wales(*)	24.4	162 (80%)	35 (22%)	157 (76%)
Primary(*)	18.7	654 (87%)	119 (19%)	632 (84%)
Secondary(*)	26.6	885 (84%)	201 (24%)	845 (83%)
Special(*)	26.0	270 (95%)	59 (24%)	266 (92%)
TA equivalent	25.8	460 (81%)	59 (15%)	489 (88%)
Pupil Welfare	29.8	177 (77%)	63 (40%)	195 (87%)
Technicians	28.3	240 (94%)	44 (23%)	214 (85%)
Oth Pup Supp	12.2	149 (81%)	12 (11%)	132 (71%)
Facilities	19.6	81 (96%)	20 (33%)	78 (92%)
Admin	30.7	494 (97%)	107 (25%)	435 (87%)
Site staff	31.9	57 (95%)	36 (78%)	58 (100%)

(\*) % values weighted by prevalence of each support staff category in schools

Contracted hours are lower in primary schools (18.7 hours on average) than in secondary (26.6 hours) and special schools (26 hours) (see Table 12). Most support staff said that they were on permanent rather than temporary contracts (87% vs. 13%). Staff in the pupil welfare category were least likely to have a permanent contract (77%). Staff in categories associated with less pupil contact appeared to be most likely to have a permanent contract, that is, facilities staff, administrative staff and site staff (96%, 97% and 95%).

Support staff were asked to say for how many weeks they were contracted to work. The majority (78%) were contracted to work less than 52 weeks per year (see Table 12), whilst the remainder (25%) were contracted to work all 52 weeks of the year. A slightly higher percentage of support staff in primary schools worked less than 52 weeks a year. There were large differences between support staff. Site staff were noticeably most likely to be contracted to work 52 weeks per year (78%), while other pupil support staff and TA equivalent staff were more likely to be contracted for less than 52 weeks per year.

We also asked respondents to say whether they were paid during term time only or all year round. Most respondents (85%) were paid across the whole year, regardless of whether they were contracted to work less than 52 weeks per year. This was more common in England than Wales (85% vs. 76%). ‘Other pupil support’ staff were most likely to be paid term time only (see Table 12).

There were several overall differences between school types. Support staff in primary schools had lower contracted hours, and were more likely to work less than 52 weeks a year. Staff in special schools were more likely to have a permanent contract and have their salary paid all year round. This may be attributable to several factors. The school day is shorter in primary schools than in secondary

or special schools. Special schools incorporate more planning and other organizational time with their TAs (see TQ and SSQ analyses) so staff may have this built into their contract time. It may also be that the likely greater prevalence of part time posts in primary schools could help explain the overall findings on contracted hours, though this requires further examination

4.3.4 More on contracts and working arrangements of support staff: job descriptions, appraisal, working more hours than contract (see Appendices 44 – 49 for full details)

Support staff were asked if they had a job description (see Table 13). Most (88%) of respondents said that they had. More support staff in special schools had a job description (93%) than in primary schools (90%) and secondary school (84%), and more support staff in England than Wales had a job description (88% vs. 81%).

*Table 13. Do support staff have a job description, is their work supervised by a teacher, and have they had an appraisal in the last year?*

	<b>Have a Job description</b>	<b>Work Supervised by a teacher</b>	<b>Staff appraised in last year</b>
	<b>Number (%)</b>	<b>Number (%)</b>	<b>Number (%)</b>
All staff(*)	1777 (88%)	770 (43%)	984 (47%)
England(*)	1621 (88%)	687 (43%)	905 (48%)
Wales(*)	156 (81%)	83 (44%)	79 (36%)
Primary(*)	671 (90%)	343 (48%)	335 (46%)
Secondary(*)	847 (84%)	279 (34%)	489 (48%)
Special(*)	259 (93%)	148 (49%)	160 (53%)
TA equivalent	487 (89%)	424 (77%)	321 (60%)
Pupil Welfare	216 (94%)	51 (22%)	138 (63%)
Technicians	215 (85%)	63 (25%)	107 (44%)
Other Pup Support	148 (84%)	73 (40%)	62 (36%)
Facilities	67 (88%)	7 (8%)	23 (32%)
Administrative	446 (90%)	92 (19%)	231 (48%)
Site staff	54 (95%)	9 (16%)	21 (41%)

(\*) % values weighted by prevalence of each support staff category in schools

Nearly half (43%) of respondents stated that their work was supervised by a teacher (see Table 13). A much higher proportion of support staff had their work supervised by a teacher in primary schools and special schools, in comparison to secondary schools. Other pupil support and especially TA equivalent staff were most likely to have their work supervised by a teacher (40% and 77%).

About half (47%) of all staff had been appraised in the last 12 months (see Table 13). This was most likely to have taken place in special schools (53%). Fewer staff in Wales had had an appraisal in the last 12 months (36% vs. 48%). Staff most likely to have had an appraisal in the last 12 months were pupil welfare and TA equivalent staff (63% and 60%). Staff least likely to have been appraised were facilities staff and other pupil support staff (32% and 36%).

Table 14 gives systematic details on whether support staff were required to work more hours than specified in their contracts. It was found that half (51%) of respondents worked more hours than specified in their contract. Site staff and administrative staff are particularly likely to work more hours (73% and 70%), whilst other pupil support staff were least likely (24%). There was little difference between types of school or country.

*Table 14. Are support staff required to work more hours than their contract specifies? If so how often does this happen, and are support staff paid for extra hours they work? (Only staff who are required to work more hours than their contract specifies)*

	<b>Required to work more hours</b>	<b>Work extra hours &gt; once/week</b>	<b>Always or sometimes paid for extra hours</b>
	<b>Number (%)</b>	<b>Number %</b>	<b>Number (%)</b>
All staff(*)	1191 (51%)	699 (60%)	558 (53%)
England(*)	1079 (51%)	644 (59%)	520 (55%)
Wales(*)	112 (54%)	54 (57%)	38 (41%)
Primary(*)	431 (47%)	264 (56%)	224 (53%)
Secondary(*)	597 (55%)	341 (59%)	262 (57%)
Special(*)	163 (49%)	93 (55%)	72 (55%)
TA equivalent	327 (58%)	196 (64%)	139 (43%)
Pupil Welfare	144 (62%)	85 (61%)	40 (28%)
Technicians	146 (56%)	85 (75%)	57 (40%)
Oth Pupil Supp	45 (24%)	21 (54%)	24 (56%)
Facilities	41 (48%)	18 (50%)	34 (87%)
Admin	354 (70%)	227 (63%)	185 (53%)
Site staff	44 (73%)	23 (53%)	36 (82%)

(\*) % values weighted by prevalence of each support staff category in schools

Table 14 also shows that most (60%) of those who worked more hours than specified in their contract worked more hours at least once a week. There were few differences between countries and school type. Extra analyses showed that of those staff who said they worked extra hours, 54% were paid, with 38% stating that they were always paid for this additional time, and 18% saying they were sometimes paid (see Appendix 48). About half of support staff were therefore not paid for their additional time. It is noticeable that staff in Wales who worked extra hours are less likely to be paid for them (59% vs. 45% in England), which might explain why less of them work extra hours. There were few differences between school types in terms of being paid for extra time. Staff most likely to be paid for extra time were facilities and site staff (72% and 71%). Staff least likely to be paid were pupil welfare staff, technicians and TA equivalent staff (14%, 16% and 22%).

There were therefore several overall differences between school types. Support staff in special schools were more likely to have a job description, more likely to have their work supervised by a teacher (in comparison to staff in secondary schools), and more likely to have been appraised in the last 12 months. This suggests that special schools are further ahead in terms of these aspects of staff management. Staff in primary schools were less likely to have been appraised in the last 12 months. Staff in secondary schools were less likely to have a job description and less likely to be supervised

by a teacher. There are likely to be several reasons for this last finding. In primary schools, most support staff were classroom based, and more likely to work for specific teachers, for longer periods of time. Staff in special schools were also likely to work closely with their teachers. Conversely, support staff in secondary schools appeared to work less in tandem with individual teachers, but more to an overall plan directed from outside the individual classrooms. This would not account, though, for why secondary school support staff were less likely to have a job description.

#### 4.4 Support staff wages

Support staff were asked how much they were paid (before tax). They were given the option of recording this in terms of wage per hour or the annual salary. All wages recorded as annual salary were converted to an hourly rate, and all figures in the subsequent sections are reported on this scale. This calculation was based on the number of weeks contracted to work, and the hours worked per week. All suspicious figures were manually checked to ensure that all wages were as accurate as possible. Results on wages are presented in Table 15 and Appendix 50 and are broken down in terms of each category of support staff.

[Note that some caution should be exercised when interpreting the figures, as there was some difficulty in identifying support staff who were contracted to work all year round, but who only actually worked during term time. These staff may have been assumed to be working all year round, and so their hourly wage may be underestimated.]

Table 15. Wages of support staff (in £ per hour)

Support Staff Group	Mean wage	<£7.50 per hour		£7.50-£10.00 per hour		£10.01-£15.00 per hour		>£15.00 per hour	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
All staff(*)	£8.80	399	42%	441	30%	444	24%	98	5%
England(*)	£8.89	344	40%	404	31%	417	25%	95	5%
Wales(*)	£7.77	54	56%	36	27%	27	16%	3	1%
Primary(*)	£7.90	226	54%	164	28%	110	16%	16	2%
Secondary(*)	£9.55	128	32%	219	32%	264	30%	61	8%
Special(*)	£9.06	44	37%	57	28%	70	30%	21	5%
TA Equivalent	£8.66	130	35%	146	40%	88	24%	4	1%
Pupil Welfare	£10.83	20	14%	37	27%	71	51%	11	8%
Technicians	£10.20	34	20%	58	35%	64	38%	12	7%
Oth Pup Supp	£8.13	78	61%	25	19%	16	12%	10	8%
Facilities	£6.19	56	90%	5	8%	1	2%	0	0%
Admin.	£11.01	31	9%	120	33%	175	48%	39	11%
Site staff	£7.64	20	47%	20	47%	3	7%	0	0%

(\*) % values weighted by prevalence of each support staff category in schools

It can be seen in Table 15 that higher average wages were paid in England than Wales, and a higher average wage is more likely in secondary schools, followed by special schools and then primary schools. On average, support staff in primary schools are paid about £1.50 less than those in secondary schools. It can also be seen that the highest average salaries were paid to pupil welfare staff, technicians and administrative staff (all over £10 per hour), while the lowest salaries were paid

to facilities and site staff (£6.19 and £7.64 respectively). It can also be seen that higher salaries (over £15 per hour) were paid to pupil welfare staff, technicians, other pupil support staff, and particularly administrative staff. These support staff groups had a wider range of staff, paid at different levels, and some, e.g., senior administrative staff, were relatively much more highly paid. It is noticeable that almost all facilities staff were paid less than £7.50, and almost all site staff were paid £10 or less.

#### 4.4.1 Factors influencing support staff wages

We then examined whether the following background factors had an influence on the wages of each of the seven support staff categories:

- School type – primary, secondary or special
- Number full-time equivalent (FTE) pupils
- % of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)
- % of pupils with special needs (SEN) and with statements
- % of pupils with special needs (SEN) but without statements
- % of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)
- % of pupils from minority ethnic groups
- School setting – rural or urban
- Area of the country
- Country (England, Wales)

We also examined whether the following support staff characteristics had an effect:

- Staff gender
- Staff age
- Staff ethnic group
- Staff qualification level
- Staff post title group

A description of the statistical methods is given in Appendix 125 and full results are given in Appendices 51- 57.

##### *i) TA equivalent*

The mean wage for TA equivalent staff was £8.66 per hour. School type was the most important factor influencing the wages of TA equivalent staff; staff in special schools received higher wages than those in primary and secondary schools. Also, staff working in schools with a high proportion of pupils with a first language other than English had higher wages than those with a low proportion.

##### *ii) Pupil welfare*

The mean wage for pupil welfare staff was £10.83 per hour. Staff working in secondary and special schools had higher wages than those working in primary schools. The difference between areas showed that staff working in London had the highest wages, whilst those working in Wales had the lowest wages. Females had lower wages than males, with an average difference of £2.39 per hour. Older staff had higher wages, with a 10 year increase in age resulting in increased wages of almost £0.50 per hour. Staff qualified above GCSE level received wages that were, on average, £1.51 higher than staff whose maximum qualification level was to GCSE or lower.

##### *iii) Technicians*

The mean wage for technicians was £10.20 per hour. There was a significant effect of school type, the percentage of pupils from ethnic minority groups, school setting, staff gender and staff qualification level on the wages of technicians. After adjusting for the effects of the other explanatory variables, technicians working in secondary schools were the highest paid. Also, technicians working in urban schools had higher wages than those in rural schools, with an average difference of £1.75 per

hour between the two types of setting. Female technicians had lower wages than male technicians, with an average difference of £1.29 per hour. Technicians in schools with a larger proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups had higher wages, as did staff with a higher qualification level. Both of these last results were of borderline statistical significance.

*iv) Other pupil support*

The mean wage for other pupil support staff was £8.13 per hour. The number of FTE pupils, the percentage of pupils in the school with SEN (no statements) and staff qualification level were all found to significantly influence the wages of other pupil support staff. The relationship between number of pupils and wages of other pupil support staff was complex. Staff working in schools with around 1000 pupils had the highest wages while staff working in smaller schools (less than 500 pupils) and larger schools (more than 1500 pupils) had lower wages. An increase in the proportion of pupils with SEN with statements was found to decrease the wages, whilst staff with a higher qualification level earned more than those with a lower level of qualification.

*v) Facilities*

The mean wage for facilities staff was £6.19 per hour. Again there was a significant effect of the percentage of pupils with SEN (without statements), with a higher percentage associated with a lower wage. Staff working in urban schools earned less than those working in rural schools, whilst older facilities staff earned more than younger staff. A 10 year increase in age was associated with an increase in salary of around £0.50 per hour.

*vi) Administrative*

The mean wage for the administrative staff was £11.01 per hour. There was a significant effect of the percentage of pupils with SEN (without statements), area, staff gender, staff age, and staff qualification level upon the wages of administrative staff. Staff working in schools with a higher proportion of pupils with SEN (without statements) tended to have a lower wage than those working in schools with a lower proportion. Wages differed by area, with staff in London having the highest wages, and staff in the South-West the lowest wages. Females obtained a lower salary than their male equivalents, whilst staff qualified above GCSE level had a higher salary than those qualified up to GCSE level or below. Older administrative staff had higher wages than younger support staff.

*vii) Site staff*

The mean wage for site staff was £7.64 per hour. The analysis indicated that, again, school setting and area had an impact upon the wages of site staff. Staff in urban schools were paid more than those in rural schools, whilst the area results showed that site staff in London were the highest paid, and those in the North-East and North-West were the lowest paid.

4.4.2 Differences in wages between male and female support staff

There was therefore a significant difference in wages between men and women for three support staff groups, namely pupil welfare, technicians and administrative staff. A possible explanation for this could be that some post titles within each of the seven support staff categories, held by men, had better paid jobs than those held by women (in other words the difference might be more to do with posts held than differences in wages for the same support staff category). Further examination of the data showed that within each of these 3 support staff categories, men and women do indeed have significantly different post titles.

For the pupil welfare category, posts with the highest percentage of males were Education Welfare Officer and Connexions Personal Advisor. These were also the highest paid positions within the pupil welfare category. Therefore, differences in post titles for men and women could help explain the overall difference between men and women.

There is a similar situation for technicians. Within this category, the post title with the highest proportion of males was ICT network manager, and this was the post title with the highest wages in this category. Again, the imbalance of jobs between genders could help explain the difference in wages between males and females.

The explanation did not hold for the administrative group, however. Data manager and examinations officer were the posts with the highest percentage of male subjects. However, both of these two posts were paid a wage that was below the average for administrative staff. An imbalance in post titles between men and women does not therefore seem to be the reason for a difference in wages between males and females.

#### 4.4.3 Comment on factors influencing support staff wages

The data on support staff wages are systematic but complex and in this section we seek to summarise main trends. We found that wages overall were higher in England than Wales and higher in special and secondary schools than primary schools. The highest average salaries were paid to pupil welfare staff, technicians and administrative staff, while the lowest salaries were paid to facilities and site staff. Higher salaries (over £15 per hour) were paid to pupil welfare staff, technicians, other pupil support staff, and particularly administrative staff. These support staff groups had a wider range of staff, paid at different levels. Some, e.g., senior administrative staff were relatively highly paid. It was noticeable that almost all facilities staff were paid less than £7.50, and almost all site staff were paid £10 or less.

A number of factors were found to influence the wages of support staff. There were some differences between school types. TA equivalent and welfare staff had highest wages in special schools, perhaps reflecting the greater specialist knowledge required, whilst technicians in secondary schools had higher salaries than those in primary and special schools, again reflecting the greater specialist skills required. School type did not influence the wages of the other categories of support staff.

There was a difference between areas for several support staff categories. Where a difference was found, wages were highest in London, with no consistent effects for the other areas.

Generally staff qualified above GCSE level were paid higher wages than those who were qualified to GCSE level or below. However, there was no effect of qualification level on the wages of TA equivalent, facilities and site staff. These results show that the link between qualifications and wage only applies to some support staff groups. These results are further extended by the finding that female staff had lower wages than their male counterparts for the welfare, technicians and admin staff categories, but there was no difference between males and females for the other categories. This probably reflects the fact that career progression and higher wages are more possible in these groups and the point that males are more likely to reach senior positions. Further examination of the data showed that within two of these support staff categories, men and women have significantly different post titles. For the pupil welfare category, males had the highest paid positions, and this could help explain the difference between men and women. There was a similar situation for technicians. Males occupied the post with the highest wages in this category. The explanation did not hold, however, for the administrative group.

Age was significant in influencing the wages of welfare, technicians and administrative staff, with older staff paid more than younger staff. Once again, these support staff groups seem to have more opportunities for career progression, and greater experience, seniority and higher wages are more likely with increasing age.



#### 4.5 Factors affecting working more hours than contracts specified

We then conducted a similar set of further analyses to identify factors influencing whether support staff worked more hours than their contract specified. The factors included were the same as those used in the analysis of factors influencing wages. A summary of the results are given in Appendix 58 and on statistical methods in Appendix 126.

After adjusting for the effects of the other explanatory variables, only support staff type, the percentage of minority ethnic pupils, and staff age were found to influence working extra hours. The difference between post title groups showed that administrative staff and site staff were most likely to work extra hours, and other pupil support staff were least likely to work extra hours. In addition, staff in schools with a higher percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups were less likely to work extra hours, and older support staff were more likely to work extra hours.

#### 4.6 Support staff required qualifications, required previous experience, and training

The next set of analyses examined the qualifications and experience needed by support staff and their experience of training and INSET (see Table 16 and Table 17 for a summary of findings and Appendix 59 – 66 for full details).

*Table 16. Did support staff need specific qualifications or any previous experience for their post?*

	<b>Required Qualifications</b>	<b>Previous experience required</b>
	<b>Number (%)</b>	<b>Number (%)</b>
All staff(*)	817 (35%)	1089 (44%)
England(*)	733 (33%)	994 (45%)
Wales(*)	84 (37%)	95 (38%)
Primary(*)	259 (27%)	335 (36%)
Secondary(*)	428 (38%)	592 (53%)
Special(*)	130 (35%)	162 (47%)
TA equivalent	238 (42%)	261 (48%)
Pupil welfare	135 (58%)	166 (74%)
Technicians	93 (36%)	152 (59%)
Other Pupil Support	37 (20%)	47 (25%)
Facilities	22 (26%)	19 (24%)
Administrative	215 (44%)	329 (67%)
Site staff	3 (5%)	20 (36%)

(\*) % values weighted by prevalence of each support staff category in schools

Table 17. Have support staff attended any school or non-school based In-Service education/training, other education/training relevant to their current post or any education/training which leads to a qualification, in their current post in the last two years?

	<b>Attended school based In-Service Education</b>	<b>Attended non-school based In-Service Education</b>	<b>Attended other education or training</b>	<b>Attended education leading to a qualification</b>
	<b>Number (%)</b>	<b>Number (%)</b>	<b>Number (%)</b>	<b>Number (%)</b>
All staff(*)	1397 (64%)	1202 (49%)	1125 (50%)	686 (30%)
England(*)	1269 (65%)	1107 (50%)	1028 (50%)	624 (30%)
Wales(*)	128 (60%)	95 (46%)	97 (45%)	62 (31%)
Primary(*)	560 (67%)	405 (47%)	429 (49%)	260 (28%)
Secondary(*)	614 (57%)	613 (50%)	517 (48%)	304 (29%)
Special(*)	223 (73%)	184 (53%)	179 (56%)	122 (38%)
TA equivalent	524 (92%)	378 (67%)	393 (71%)	279 (49%)
Pupil Welfare	147 (64%)	182 (80%)	183 (80%)	132 (58%)
Technicians	130 (50%)	147 (57%)	115 (45%)	70 (27%)
Oth Pupil Support	93 (49%)	46 (25%)	59 (31%)	33 (18%)
Facilities	26 (32%)	14 (18%)	24 (30%)	14 (18%)
Admin	342 (68%)	319 (63%)	245 (50%)	97 (19%)
Site staff	21 (37%)	17 (30%)	14 (25%)	4 (7%)

(\*) % values weighted by prevalence of each support staff category in schools

Two thirds of respondents (65%) reported that they did not need specific qualifications in order to be appointed to their post (see Table 16). Pupil welfare support staff were most likely to need specific qualifications for the post (58%) while only 5% of site staff needed specific qualifications. Staff in secondary and special schools (38% and 35% respectively) were more likely to need a qualification for their post than in primary schools (27%).

Just over half (56%) of respondents were not required to have previous experience in order to be appointed to their post (see Table 16). Secondary and special schools were more likely to have required previous experience from their staff (53% and 47% respectively) than primary schools (36%). A higher proportion of schools in England compared to Wales required previous experience (45% vs. 38%). As with qualifications, pupil welfare staff were again most likely to need previous experience (74%). Other pupil support and facilities staff were least likely to need previous experience for the post (25% and 24%).

Of the 161 support staff in Wales who answered the relevant question, only 22% held a post which required them to be able to speak Welsh for at least some of their working time. A higher proportion of support staff in primary schools (31%) were required to speak Welsh in comparison to secondary schools (24%) (there were no respondents in special schools required to speak Welsh). Of those staff who were required to speak Welsh, staff in primary schools also had the higher proportion of their time when they were required to speak Welsh, though numbers giving this answer are very low and this finding should be treated cautiously.

Two thirds (64%) of staff had attended school based INSET in the last 2 years (see Table 17). A slightly higher proportion had attended in England than in Wales (65% vs. 60%). Those in special schools had attended most (73%), and those in secondary schools the least (57%). Extra analyses showed that only a minority of support staff (18%) did so during their own time and were not paid to attend. The remainder attended during their own time but were paid, or attended during paid working time. It is noticeable that TA equivalent staff were most likely to have attended school based INSET (92%). Facilities staff (32%) and site staff (37%) were the least likely to attend school based INSET. A higher proportion of 'other pupil support' and facilities staff had attended courses during their own time, and were paid for it. TA equivalent and other pupil support staff were more likely to have attended school based INSET in their own time (24% and 19%).

Just under half (49%) of respondents had attended non-school based INSET in the previous two years (see Table 17). Once again those in special schools had attended more INSET sessions, though this time primary support staff had attended least sessions (53% special, 50% secondary and 47% primary). Again more support staff in England than Wales had attended (50% vs. 46%). A quarter (26%) of support staff attended during their own time and were not paid to attend. The remainder attended during their own time and were paid or in paid working time. Staff most likely to have attended non-school based INSET are now pupil welfare staff (80%) and also TA equivalent staff again (67%). Least likely to have attended non-school based INSET were facilities staff, other pupil support staff and site staff (18%, 25% and 30%). TA equivalent and other pupil support staff were more likely to have attended in their own unpaid time. Administrative staff, pupil welfare staff and technicians were more likely to attend non-school based INSET during their paid time (84%, 82% and 83%), while other pupil support and facilities staff were less likely (53% and 36%).

A similar proportion of support staff (50%) said they had received other education or training relevant to their post (see Table 17). Again those in special schools (56%) attended more than secondary (48%) and primary schools (49%), and those in England (50%) had attended more than those in Wales (45%). This time a third (32%) of support staff attended during their own unpaid time, the remainder attended during their own time (paid) or their paid working time. Other pupil support, facilities and site staff were the least likely to have attended other education and training (32%, 30% and 25%). TA equivalent, technicians and 'other pupil support' staff were most likely to have attended in their own time (42%, 37% and 35%).

By way of summary we calculated the number of staff who had no INSET, education or training of any sort over the past two years. Only 20% had had no training at all, with 80% having had training. Other pupil support, facilities and site staff were the least likely to have had any training (63%, 52% and 59%).

A third (30%) of respondents had attended education or training leading to a qualification, relevant to their current post, in the previous two years (see Table 17). Special school staff were more likely to have attended training leading to a qualification in the last 2 years (38%) and primary and secondary school staff were least likely (28% and 29%). Half (51%) of these staff did so during their own time and were not paid to attend. Pupil welfare and TA equivalent staff were more likely to have attended training leading to a qualification, though TA equivalent and also technicians were the most likely to do this during their own unpaid time (62% and 63%).

Drawing these analyses on development and training together, we have therefore found a number of overall differences by school type. Support staff in special schools were more likely to have school based and non-school based INSET, more likely to have attended other education or training relevant to their posts, and more likely to have attended education and training leading to a qualification in the previous two years. Primary school support staff were least likely to need specific qualifications for

their post, and least likely to require previous experience. They were least likely to have attended non-school based INSET. Secondary school support staff were least likely to have attended school based INSET. There were also country differences. Support staff in England were more likely to need previous experience, more likely to have attended school based INSET, non-school based INSET, and any other education or training relevant to their posts.

There were also some overall differences between support staff categories. TA equivalent staff, pupil welfare and admin staff were more likely to have attended school based INSET, non school based INSET and other courses. Other pupil support, facilities, and site staff were the least likely to have attended school based INSET, non school based INSET and other courses. This may be connected to the possible greater likelihood of not being school employees (LEA or contractors) and therefore not being included in school training arrangements. TA equivalent and other pupil support staff were the most likely to undertake the three types of training and development activities in their own time and not be paid for attendance. Pupil welfare and TA equivalent staff were more likely to have attended training leading to a qualification, though TA equivalent and also technicians were the most likely to do this during their own unpaid time.

#### 4.6.1 Factors affecting qualifications required by support staff

Further analyses were conducted to identify factors that might be linked to whether qualifications were required. As the requirement for qualifications for each support staff group are likely to be very different, it was decided to examine the effect of the explanatory variables on the requirement for qualification in each group separately. The same factors used in the analysis of support staff wages were included. Statistical methods are described in Appendix 126. Full results are shown for each support staff category in Appendices 67 – 72.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, staff who were qualified to a higher standard were more likely to have posts that required qualifications in the case of TA equivalent staff, pupil welfare staff and technicians. Staff qualification level was not found to influence the requirement for qualifications for the other four support staff categories.

There were few differences between the three types of school. The exception was for pupil welfare staff, who were most likely to require qualifications in special schools. There were few differences between regions of the country. An exception was for technicians, where those in the North-East were most likely to require qualifications, which may be connected to local labour market conditions and industrial changes. Staff ethnic group and gender did not have a consistent role in affecting the likelihood of requiring qualifications. Age was only an important factor for pupil welfare staff, with older staff more likely to require qualifications.

#### **Key findings from Chapter 4**

- 16% of schools had 10 or less support staff, 30% had 11-20 support staff, 37% had 21-40, 11% had 41-60, and 6% had 61 or more staff. There were far more support staff in secondary schools and they had higher support staff FTE.
- About a quarter of schools said that they had vacancies for support staff post titles, a third had particular problems of recruitment, and 11% of schools had a particular problem with turnover. Secondary schools had the highest level of vacancies, primary schools least. Primary schools also had more problems with turnover compared to secondary schools and special schools.

- 'Other pupil support' staff presented the greatest recruitment and retention challenge for schools.
- 71% of schools had a change in the number of support staff since January 2003 (to the time of the survey in 2004). The most common reason for change was change in the number of children with Special Educational Needs, and in almost cases this led to an increase in support staff.
- Schools in areas with higher need had more recruitment and turnover problems, and vacancies.
- Most support staff were female and there were more female support staff in primary than special and secondary schools. Only site staff were more likely to be male than female. Most respondents were aged 36 and over, and almost all classified themselves as of white ethnic background. There was a fairly even balance between those who had qualifications at GCSE level or lower and those who had qualifications above GCSE. Site staff along with other pupil support staff and especially facilities staff had the lowest qualifications. Pupil welfare staff and technicians had the highest level of qualifications.
- Support staff worked on average 23 hours per week and the majority were on permanent contracts and contracted to work less than 52 weeks a year. Support staff in primary schools had lower contracted hours and were more likely to work less than 52 weeks a year.
- Half of support staff worked more hours than specified in their contract and nearly two thirds worked more hours than specified at least once a week. Support staff in special schools were more likely to have a job description, more likely than those in secondary schools to have their work supervised by a teacher, and more likely to have been appraised in the last 12 months.
- Wages overall were higher in England than Wales and higher on average in secondary schools and lowest in primary schools. The highest average salaries were paid to pupil welfare staff, technicians and administrative staff, while the lowest salaries were paid to facilities and site staff.
- Two thirds of support staff did not need specific qualifications and just over half were not required to have previous experience in order to be appointed to their post. Two thirds of support staff had attended school based INSET in the last two years and half had attended non-school based INSET or other education training relevant to their post. Most were paid to attend.

## 5. Deployment of support staff and views on their job

In this chapter we examine results on the deployment of support staff in schools, in terms of the main tasks undertaken and the degree of support they provided for pupils and teachers, and also their job satisfaction and views on their job.

### 5.1 Deployment of support staff: main tasks undertaken

As described in the method section, support staff were given a list of 91 tasks and asked to tick which of the tasks they carried out in their posts. As described in Chapter 3, the responses were used as the basis for classifying support staff into the seven categories but they also provide a detailed and systematic account of the deployment of the full range of support staff in schools. In order to illustrate this deployment, and differences between the seven support staff groups, we calculated the 15 most common tasks performed within each, together with the percentage of staff members in each group who perform each task. These are presented in Table 18 and Appendix 3. They therefore provide a profile of the defining activities of each group. Strictly speaking these data reflect the number of support staff in each category who performed a given task; they therefore reflect how widespread a task is rather than how frequently it is performed. Supplementary data on frequencies will be collected as part of the next wave of Strand 1.

*Table 18. Most commonly performed tasks performed by each support staff group (figures are % of staff in each group that perform a particular task)*

Task	%	Task	%
<b>TA Equivalent</b>		<b>Pupil Welfare</b>	
Help pupils understand instructions	96	Interaction with parents/carers	95
Support pupils in learning goals	96	Attend and take part in meetings	90
Feedback to teachers	96	Interact with agencies out of sch.	89
Managing pupil behaviour	94	Feedback to teachers	77
Attend training activities	94	Attend training activities	75
Maintain good work environment	92	Help pupils make choices	73
Support pupils on trips and visits	89	Record keeping (pupil)	71
Reward pupil achievement	88	Pastoral support for pupils	69
Attend and take part in meetings	88	Implement statutory policies	65
Support and use ICT	88	Facilities – admin/management	63
Supervise pupils out of class	85	Maintain good work environment	61
Deliver lessons/learning activities	83	Feedback to pupils	61
Monitor and record pupil progress	81	Managing pupil behaviour	60
Classroom preparation (inc display)	80	Support pupils in learning goals	59
Help pupils make informed choices	79	Provide specialist pupil support	57
<b>Technicians</b>		<b>Other Pupil Support</b>	
Stock storage / ordering / auditing	83	Managing pupil behaviour	68
Support and use ICT	83	Supervise pupils out of class	64
Operate equipment	81	Feedback to teachers	62
Maintain good work environment	77	Help pupils understand instruction	55
Maintain / check / repair equipment	77	Maintain good work environment	52
Prepare/maintain resources / equip.	77	First aid / pupil welfare duties	49
Attend and take part in meetings	66	Reward pupil achievement	47
Provide guidance for teachers	62	Attend training activities	45

Attend training activities	60	Attend and take part in meetings	44
Feedback to teachers	57	Attend to pupils' personal needs	41
Monitor/manage stock/supplies	55	Support pupils in learning goals	33
Receive and distribute deliveries	53	Support pupils on trips and visits	31
Classroom preparation (inc display)	53	Help pupils make informed choice	30
Facilities – admin/management	53	Feedback to pupils	28
Interact with agencies out of school	53	Assist teacher with Health/Safety	25
<b>Facilities</b>		<b>Administrative</b>	
Ensure standards of cleanliness	76	Clerical / admin/ office support	90
Operate equipment	64	Advice/guidance to staff, pupils	76
Ensure security premises/contents	59	Deal with school correspondence	75
Stock storage/ ordering/ equipment	50	Participate in visits, trips, events	75
Remove and rearrange furniture	48	Attend and take part in meetings	70
Maintain / check / repair equipment	44	Interact with agencies out of sch.	69
Maintain good work environment	42	General office support	68
Receive and distribute deliveries	39	Record keeping (pupil)	68
Sweep, weed, disinfect areas	39	Clerical / admin support	65
Arrange storage of stock/ supplies	38	Reception / telephone duties	63
Report heating system defects	33	General school administration	62
Monitor/manage stock	33	Interaction with parents/carers	62
Ensure toilets are maintained	30	Develop/comply with policies	61
Help to support and train other staff	30	Attend training activities	60
Admin tasks, e.g. ordering materials	30	Collate pupil data from school	59
<b>Site</b>			
Report heating system defects	97		
Ensure security premises/ contents	95		
Ensure all lighting is working	95		
Sweep, weed, disinfect areas	93		
Clear paths of ice and snow	93		
Remove and rearrange furniture	90		
Security when building is hired	90		
Other duties from use premises	90		
Attend emergencies out of hours	88		
Report defects in fabric of building	86		
Ensure toilets are maintained	86		
Ensure standards of cleanliness	85		
Maintain / check / repair equipment	83		
Inspect the heating system	83		
Carry out minor repairs	81		

We saw in Chapter 3 that there were strong statistical reasons to organise support staff post titles into seven groups, on the basis of the similarity of tasks undertaken within each group, but it can also be seen in Table 18 that the overall percentage of tasks varies between support staff categories. In the case of site staff, for example, the most widespread 15 tasks are conducted by 81% or more staff and there are 8 tasks done by 90% or more of staff. In a similar way, for TA equivalent staff, the most widespread 15 tasks are done by 79% of staff, and 6 tasks are done by 90% or more. This suggests a uniformity of activities in these two support staff categories which is not apparent, for example, in the case of 'other pupil support' staff and facilities staff where the 15 most prevalent tasks are conducted

by only 25% and 30% respectively. This suggests that these support staff groups conduct more diverse tasks. They may also contain more diverse post titles.

In terms of the most widespread tasks:

- Virtually all TA equivalent staff supported pupils to understand instructions and achieve learning goals, and manage pupil behaviour. Also common was giving feedback to teachers.
- Pupil welfare staff were most likely to interact with parents/carers, liaise with agencies and professionals out of school, and attend and take part in meetings.
- Technicians most commonly supported and used ICT, participated in stock storage, ordering and auditing, and operated equipment.
- 'Other pupil support' staff managed pupil behaviour, supervised pupils out of class and gave feedback to teachers.
- Facilities staff ensured standards of cleanliness were maintained, operated equipment, and ensured the security of premises and contents.
- Administrative staff offered clerical, administrative and general office support, provided general advice and guidance to staff, pupils and others, and dealt with school correspondence.
- Site staff reported heating system defects, ensured the security of premises and contents and ensure that all lighting is in working order.

There were some tasks common to different support staff categories but for the most part they performed different activities.

## **5.2 Nature of support staff roles: supporting pupils and teachers**

In the SSQ we asked two questions concerning the amount of time spent:

- supporting pupils
- supporting teachers

Clearly the two types of support staff are not mutually exclusive; for example, support for pupils can also represent support for teachers. However, the distinction drawn is important when distinguishing between direct support for pupils, e.g., when interacting with pupils in class, from indirect support through support provided for teachers, e.g., through taking on administrative tasks. This was a distinction found important in previous research (Blatchford, Bassett and Brown, 2005). Both of these were assessed on a five point scale, with support 'all the time' at one extreme and no support at the other extreme. Figures 3 to 6 (and Appendices 73 and 74) give results for all staff and also differences between England and Wales, school types and support staff categories. A third of support staff spent all their working time directly supporting pupils (38%) and 1 in 10 spent all their time directly supporting teachers (11%). A third (32%) of respondents spent no working time supporting pupils, and slightly more (40%) no time supporting teachers.



Figure 3. Time spent supporting pupils for all staff, and by country and school type

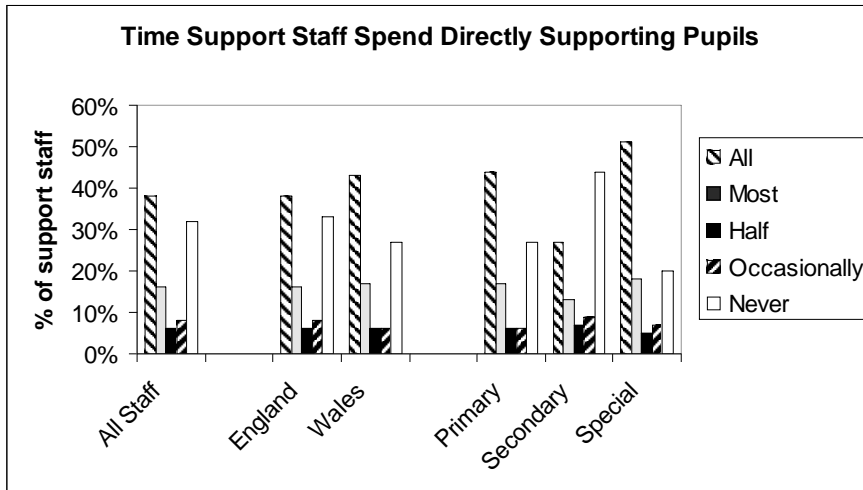


Figure 4. Time spent supporting pupils, by support staff category

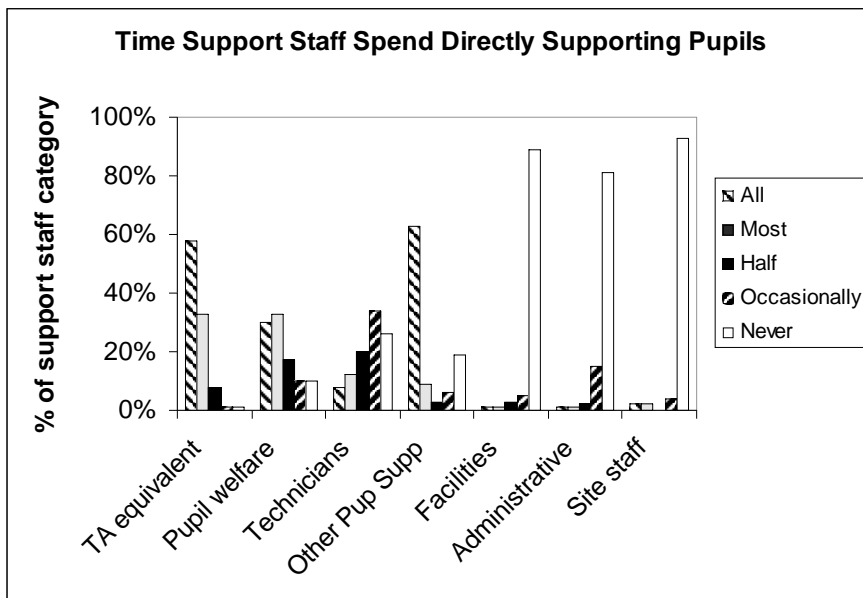


Figure 5. Time spent supporting teachers, for all staff and by country and school type

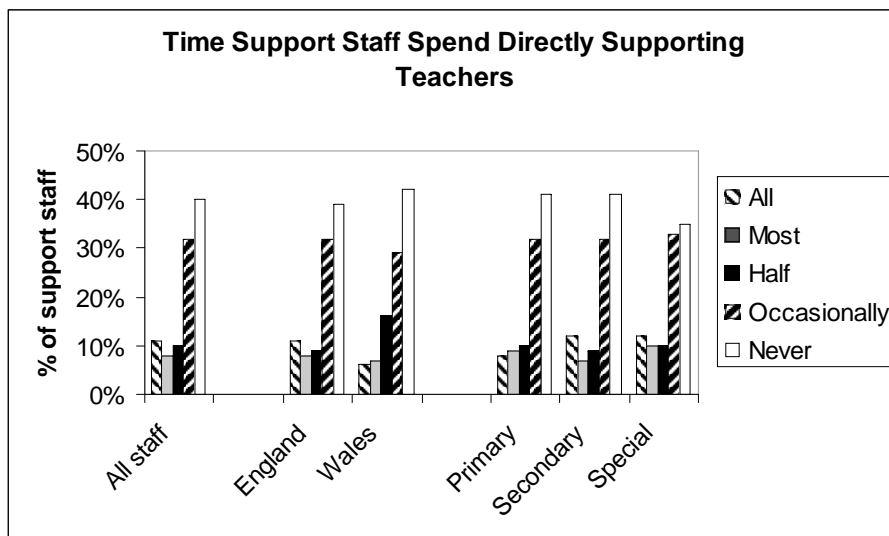
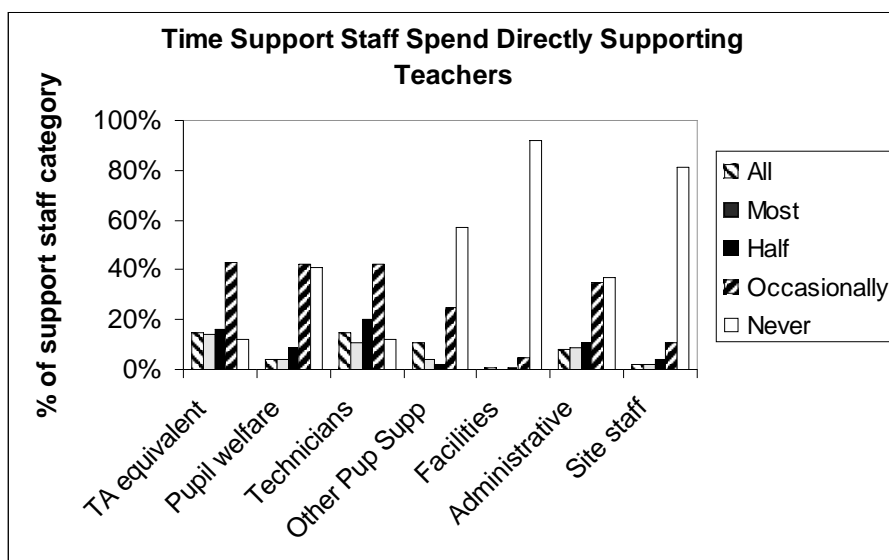


Figure 6. Time spent supporting teachers, by support staff category



As expected, this picture varied between categories of support staff. Figure 4 shows that ‘other pupil support’ and TA equivalent support staff spent much more time than other support staff groups directly supporting pupils all or most of the time. Conversely, facilities, administrative and site staff spent very little time directly supporting pupils.

Figure 6 shows that TA equivalent support staff were also most likely to directly support teachers (29% all or most of the time) but now they were closely followed by technicians (26% all or most of the time). Technicians along with administrative staff were the only categories of support staff that spent noticeably more time supporting teachers than pupils.

More support staff in special schools spend all or most of their time supporting pupils (69%) compared to primary schools (61%) and especially secondary schools (40%) (see Figure 3). Support staff in special schools were more likely to support teachers (28%), and those in secondary and especially primary schools were less likely to support teachers all or most of the time (19% and 15% - see Figure 5). The low figure for secondary schools in terms of supporting pupils is therefore not accounted for by a high figure for supporting teachers (19%). Staff in special schools therefore spent

more time supporting pupils and teachers than in secondary and primary schools. This to some extent is likely to reflect the higher number of classroom based staff in special schools, though it is also likely to reflect the greater support needed by pupils in special schools.

### 5.2.1 Factors affecting time spent with pupils

Further analyses were conducted to establish which factors were associated with time spent with pupils. These analyses were conducted separately for each category of support staff. A summary of the statistical methods is given in Appendix 127, and full results can be found in Appendices 75 - 80.

There were no factors that consistently influenced support for pupils across the different support staff groups. The type of school only influenced time that 'other pupil support' staff spent with pupils, with 'other pupil support' staff in special schools spending most time supporting pupils. The time spent did not differ between primary, secondary and special schools for the other six support staff categories. There were no differences between areas of the country for 5 of the 7 support staff categories. However, there were some differences for TA equivalent and other pupil support staff, and for both categories, staff in the North-East spent most time supporting pupils. There were no differences between rural and urban schools. Older pupil welfare and site staff spent less time supporting pupils than younger staff. The age of support staff had no effect on the results for the other 5 support staff categories.

### 5.2.2 Factors affecting time spent supporting teachers

A similar set of analyses were conducted on factors affecting time spent supporting teachers. Full results are shown in Appendices 81 – 86.

The factor which had the greatest effect on the time that staff spent supporting teachers was the number of full-time equivalent pupils. However, there was no consistent effect. In larger schools TA equivalent staff spent less time supporting teachers, whilst technicians, other pupil support and site staff spent more time supporting teachers. No other factors examined had a consistent effect upon the time supporting teachers.

There were no differences between areas of the country for 6 of the 7 support staff categories. However, there were some differences for technicians with staff in the North-East and North-West spending most time supporting teachers.

It is not therefore easy to identify or account for factors influencing support for teachers and pupils, reported in this section. It will be possible to re-examine trends in future surveys in order to see how sustained the trends are over time. Possible explanations for these results will also be explored in the case studies conducted in Strand 2 of the project.

## **5.3 Support staff working with teachers: numbers and time. Data from the TQ**

In order to obtain the teachers' experiences of working with different categories of support staff, teachers were given a chart listing the 47 most common post titles of support staff and asked to note the total number, and also the total time, staff in each category worked for or with them in the last week (including working with pupils and working on other tasks). Results are shown in Appendices 87 and 88.

In line with the MSQ results the most prevalent category of support staff by far, from the teacher's perspective, was the TA equivalent group. Nearly two thirds of teachers (63%) worked with 2 or more TA equivalent staff. The next most common category of support staff, in terms of teachers'

experience of working with them, was administrative staff (28% reported working with 2 or more staff). Teachers were least likely to work with pupil welfare staff (84% never worked with them).

There appeared to be few differences between England and Wales in numbers of support staff worked with (in the interests of space, results are not shown). A breakdown of numbers of staff worked with, by school type and support staff category, was conducted (results not shown). A main trend was in line with results from the MSQ: teachers in secondary schools worked with fewer TA equivalent staff, than teachers in primary and especially special schools (51% in secondary schools worked with 2 or more staff, compared with 63% in primary and 86% in special schools). Teachers worked with more facilities staff in special schools, but with more administrative staff and more technicians in secondary schools (results not shown).

In terms of the amount of time teachers spent working with different categories of support staff, most time was again spent working with TA equivalent staff, followed by other pupil support staff. Primary school teachers spent less time working with pupil welfare staff and more time with TA equivalent staff in special schools (77% more than 20 hours). Conversely less time is spent with TA equivalent staff in secondary schools (5% spend 20 hours plus, 22% spend no time with TA equivalent, and 52% spend just 0.1 to 5 hours) The next most common category of support staff to work with teachers are other pupil support staff, again more in special schools.

## **5.4. Teachers and support staff together**

### 5.4.1 Allocated planning and feedback time

Full results on allocated planning time are in Appendices 97-99 and results are summarised in Table 18. (This and other results refer to the position before the introduction of Phase 3 of the National Agreement.) Most teachers (75%) said that that they did not have allocated planning time with support staff they worked with in the classroom (see Table 18 and Appendix 97). There was noticeably less planning time in secondary schools (9%) and most planning time in special schools (50%). The majority of staff (85%) who had planning time were paid for it and this was divided between allocated time during non contact time within the timetabled teaching time, time within school sessions, and other time before or after school when the support staff were paid. Staff in primary schools were slightly less likely to be paid for planning time with teachers, and staff in England slightly more likely than those in Wales.

Table 18. Do teachers and the support staff they work with in the classroom have allocated planning time together? If so, do these support staff get paid for this planning time, and when does it take place?

	Allocated planning time	Paid for planning time	When does allocated planning take place?		
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Non-contact time within the timetable	Other time in school sessions	Before/after school when staff are paid
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
All staff	435 (25%)	324 (85%)	147 (33%)	111 (25%)	191 (43%)
Primary	293 (26%)	209 (82%)	89 (31%)	81 (28%)	116 (41%)
Secondary	38 (9%)	32 (94%)	27 (60%)	10 (22%)	8 (18%)
Special	104 (50%)	83 (92%)	31 (26%)	20 (17%)	67 (57%)
England	392 (26%)	294 (86%)	129 (32%)	91 (23%)	180 (45%)
Wales	43 (20%)	30 (81%)	18 (37%)	20 (41%)	11 (22%)

Table 19. Do teachers and the support staff they work with in the classroom have allocated feedback time together? If so, do these support staff get paid for this feedback time, and when does it take place?

	Feedback time	Paid for feedback time	When does allocated feedback take place?		
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Non-contact time within the timetable	Other time in school sessions	Before/after school when staff are paid
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
All staff	330 (19%)	232 (84%)	73 (23%)	117 (36%)	133 (41%)
Primary	204 (18%)	135 (80%)	44 (22%)	92 (46%)	62 (31%)
Secondary	28 (7%)	18 (78%)	13 (48%)	10 (38%)	4 (15%)
Special	98 (47%)	79 (94%)	16 (16%)	15 (15%)	67 (68%)
England	287 (17%)	207 (87%)	59 (21%)	97 (35%)	122 (44%)
Wales	43 (21%)	25 (67%)	14 (31%)	20 (44%)	11 (24%)

Results concerning allocated feedback time are shown in Appendices 103-105 and are summarised in Table 19. Results are similar to those for allocated planning time. The majority (81%) did not have allocated feedback time with support staff they worked with in the classroom. Again there was more in special schools and least in secondary schools. Most staff were paid for feedback time, especially in special schools (94%). Far more support staff were paid for feedback time in England than Wales (87% vs. 67%).

Results for whether teachers and support staff have other allocated time together were again similar (see Appendices 100-102). Most teachers did not have other allocated time together with support

staff. There was more in special schools and least in secondary schools. Most support staff were paid for this time, more in England than Wales.

Most teachers therefore said that at the time of survey (2004) they did not have allocated planning or feedback time with support staff they worked with in the classroom. Of the three types of school, there was noticeably less planning and feedback time in secondary schools and most in special schools. The results showed that the majority of staff (85%) who had planning and feedback time were paid for it.

### **5.5 Are teachers trained to work with support staff?**

We then asked teachers several questions about training in relation to support staff (see Appendices 106 -109).

The majority (77%) had never had training to help them work with support staff. This did not seem to vary by school type, though fewer teachers in Wales had received training. Four out of 10 teachers had been involved in training support staff, and this was mostly on the job training though also training in a formal setting.

About a third (32%) of teachers said that they were the line manager for any support staff, with noticeably more in special schools than primary and especially secondary schools (see Appendix 109).

### **5.6 Support staff job satisfaction and views on job**

Support staff views on their job were addressed in two ways. In the SSQ there was one open question, which we report on first, and then two questions which asked for a quantitative judgement about their levels of job satisfaction, and how much they felt appreciated by their schools.

The open question in the SSQ asked:

*“Is there anything further you would like to tell us about your deployment in the school?”*

Of the 462 support staff who answered this question (22% of respondents), 38 responses could not be included in this analysis, as their posts were either unidentified or could not be sorted into one of the seven groups identified through the analysis of tasks. So, the data presented in this report are drawn from the responses of 424 support staff, representing 20% of those who returned the questionnaire. The frequencies for each of the seven groups of support staff are set out in Appendix 89. We have retained the code names in the text for ease of reference should readers wish to follow up results.

A coding frame was developed by two researchers independently coding a selection of transcripts and then discussing emerging codes. The coding frame was then tested by independent coding of another corpus of transcripts. A high degree of agreement was found. This had 5 main categories, plus a sixth category for unclear responses (see Appendix 90).

The full table of data is included in Appendix 91. As support staff could give more than one answer, data reflect number and percentage of responses (which can exceed the number of respondents).

1. Nearly half of the 714 responses (47%) were categorised as dealing with roles, tasks and responsibilities;
2. 122 (17%) expressed respondents' feelings about their professional / job satisfaction;
3. References to pay and conditions made up 12% of responses;

4. Training / qualifications (11%);
5. Management / staff relationships (10%);
6. Less than 1% of responses could not be allocated to one of the five categories named above.

#### 5.6.1 Roles, tasks and responsibilities

This category was by far the largest, containing 47% (n=337) of the total number of responses. Most (77%) of these category A responses (Aix) were descriptive, expanding on information given in answer to other questions.

*As an LSA at the school we are required to carry out a huge variety of tasks – anything from wiping tables, to preparing worksheets and carrying out daily break and lunch time duties.... (TA equivalent)*

*Lunchtime library duty involves helping with work on computers or from books, recommending reading books, crowd and behaviour control! Homework club is after school. Help is given where needed on any subject. (Other pupil support)*

Most other category A responses (10% of all responses, n=76) were in some way negative about the roles, tasks and responsibilities of the respondents. The most common concern (Av) was how their workload had become increasingly heavy, in some cases going beyond the tasks set out in their job descriptions (5% of all responses, n=38).

*All support staff – no matter their title NNEB, TA classroom support – do lots more than what their present job description states.... (TA equivalent)*

*...This is not in my work contract and is not paid as a separate part of my job. It was dumped on me when I first arrived without notice. (Technician)*

*I feel that the workload administrators are expected to tackle and achieve is far too high. (Administration)*

*As you can see my role is a very extensive one and can have its drawbacks. Sometimes I feel that I am prevented from being as effective as I could be as I try to cover different needs. (Pupil welfare)*

The delegation of tasks from teachers to support staff obviously had a negative impact on some, as some (Aiv) responses showed (1% of all responses, n=10).

*....The introduction of the 24 points has created a them versus us situation in our school. It now seems that every day a teacher will decide that something else is an admin task and is passed down to the nearest admin officer they can find. No thought of course whether there is time to do the job or the fact that it is not on their job description. This has created a lot of bad feeling and a lot of extra work. (Administration)*

*Remodelling the workforce' promises a whole new concept in the way schools work but in practice teachers are losing jobs and admin staff are gaining them. The result of this is that the addition of tasks previously undertaken by teaching staff coupled with the continuing delegation of higher level tasks from LEA leave admin staff in schools sandwiched in the middle struggling to cope with the demands made on them. In general, school admin staff are perceived to be 'girl Fridays' always on call.....at the back (sic) and call of both teaching and support staff. (Administration)*

A similar number (1%, n=9) referred to recent role changes without connecting them to the remodelling and delegation of tasks (Ai).

*...My job description has never been set in stone and is constantly evolving.*  
(Technicians)

*I have noticed that as you become competent at tasks described in your job description you are required to take on various other tasks. This is not a problem, but it tends to make the job description redundant after approximately two years.* (Administration)

As tasks increase in number and variety, a few staff (1%, n=6) felt their work suffered (Aiii).

*The amount of clerical and admin work within the SEN department is rapidly outweighing the time allowed to pupil support.* (TA equivalent)

*Too much admin work comes my way, reducing my effectiveness and resulting in me spending less time tackling specifically data related issues....* (Administration)

Some felt that the tasks did not match their competence, either being too simple (Avii) or boring (Avi), or too difficult (Aviii) (each <1% of all responses, n=4, 2 and 4 respectively).

*I am employed on a TA scale but do not work as a TA. .... I now have very little student contact and basically admin. I am actively seeking to change my job.*  
(Administration)

*My role is now monotonous. As teachers strive to make their workload more manageable for me it has become monotonous. ...The skills I have are simply not utilised....* (TA equivalent)

*As part of job I was required to prepare lessons for 2 students out of curriculum lessons which had not been clearly explained during the initial interview. I was given no support from a 'mentoring' teacher. I was never observed and had to find my own resources. I felt this was a task far higher than that required and expected from Grade A teaching assistant.* (TA equivalent)

### 5.6.2 Pay and conditions

This next category was noted by 12% of all respondents (99 responses). The bulk of these (84 responses) were related to the issue of pay (Bi, Bii, Biii, Bvii) and all of these expressed negative feelings. The most common category in this set of responses (5% of all responses, n=39) was that pay did not match responsibilities (Bi).

*Over the last 20 years my job description has changed from welfare assistant to non-teaching assistant to teaching assistant to classroom assistant to learning support assistant. My concern is that the salary for these changing posts does not reflect the extra responsibilities which are required.* (TA equivalent)

*I am paid and employed as a technician i.e. the same as someone who puts glue pots on the tables. However in reality I am network manager/administrator supporting over 1000 users. I feel truly undervalued and will be leaving ASAP.* (Technician)



*The salary is not commensurate to the skills required and the workload. (Administrative)*

*We are very poorly paid for what we are now expected to do. The responsibility going with the job is far more than when I first started. I know teachers head/deputy head teachers' loads have increased, but so have their wages. We are expected to do a lot more without any rise in money. (Site)*

Closely connected is the issue of the workload being such that support staff had to carry on beyond their contracted hours in order to complete tasks (Biii), without being paid for the time spent (4% of all responses, n=30). This is in line with the quantitative results reported above, concerning the numbers of support staff who work more than their contracted time.

*My contract is for 32.5 h per week. I regularly work 37 h per week. I also create ... in my own time. (TA equivalent)*

*Although I am not routinely directed to spend extra time doing my job, I feel I cannot carry out my job effectively without going over my contracted hours. (TA equivalent)*

*We regularly (everyday) work through our lunch breaks to cope with the workload. (Administrative)*

Another angle on the same issue is expressed in terms of calling for review of pay scales (Bii) (2% of all responses, n=11).

*I am on the lowest paid grade and feel that the duties I do I should be on a higher grade. (TA equivalent)*

*...I am expected to take on the sole responsibility of exams and still do the assessment work for the same grade and salary!! (Administrative)*

A few support staff (n=4) expressed complaints over the disparity between their pay and that of teachers (Bvii). Conditions of service, other than pay, did not provoke anywhere near the same number of comments, though they were mostly critical. (Biv, Bv) (1% of all respondents, n= 8). One respondent expressed positive feelings about the flexibility of working and 6 others added descriptive detail about their pay and conditions. (Bvi, Bviii)

### 5.6.3 Training and qualifications

This was cited by 11% of all respondents. The largest single category covered the support which schools provide for training (Cvi) (3% of respondents, n=22):

*A great amount of time is dedicated to personal development – we are often sent on courses and receive in-house training. (TA equivalent)*

*To help me learn my current role the teacher previously doing this role helps / trains 2-3 hrs per day. (Administrative)*

*... The school has been very supportive and is arranging training for me to achieve recognised qualifications for these tasks. (Site)*

or were simply descriptive of the training provided (Cvii) (also 3% of all respondents, n=22).

*I have done City and Guilds learning support and advanced learning support certificates also ECDL and IT courses. (TA equivalent)*

*...I am at present doing NVQ3 at college. (Pupil welfare)*

*Soon to start school bursar diploma. (Administrative)*

The remaining categories all cover different negative aspects of the issue of training and qualifications and amount to 5% of all responses. The largest number of these (2% of all respondents, n=12) (Civ) deal with the lack of training opportunities.

*I came to this post from industry in order to gain qualification. In 4.5 years I have not been assisted in this. (Technician)*

*In view of my workload I have been unable to pursue the NVQ level 3 financial accounts course. (Administrative)*

*I would like to take my career further by undertaking the HLTA status but unfortunately the governors of the school had expressed their doubts that the HLTAs would become part of the school staff structure. This has made me look for effective employment. I feel relatively let down at the moment. (TA equivalent)*

A second complaint (2%, n=12) is about the lack of connection between training, qualifications and pay (Cii).

*I thought taking on an advanced learning support course I would be automatically introduced to the xxxx Pass or better rate of pay. This course took 2 years to complete and has made no difference to my wages. (TA equivalent)*

*...But I receive no extra money from school or authority for my level 4 qualification. (TA equivalent)*

*I paid for my two years at college myself but found being qualified made little difference to my salary. (TA equivalent)*

*I tend not to do any courses as they do not lead to anything – no extra pay or recognition of the qualification. (Technician)*

All but one of the remaining responses (n=6) draw attention to the mismatch of qualifications, roles and recognition (Ci, Ciii).

#### 5.6.4 Management issues, involvement in school and relationships with staff

The responses in this category made up 10% of all responses. Three particular aspects are of roughly equal importance to the respondents: the way the school develops their career (Dviii), the lack of career structure (Dvii), and the feelings of exclusion generated by their treatment (Di).

The responses set out below express satisfaction with the way schools have helped develop their careers (Dviii) (2% of all responses, n=12).

*Just had promotion to Team Leader...which I enjoy. Been on relevant course in the last 3 or 4 years. (TA equivalent)*

*I am very fortunate to...have the support of a school that allows me to develop my professional aspirations... (Pupil welfare)*

*Usually when I get offered a job somewhere else the school gives me a pay rise, rise in hours worked or promotion to stop me from leaving. (Technician)*

*I was encouraged to study for the ECOL mentoring and passed. Now I do 1hr a week drop in for my colleagues. (Administrative)*

However, a slightly smaller number (1%, n=10) expressed negative feelings about career possibilities (Dvii).

*...But there is no incentive or career ladder in place for nursery nurse within the Education Dept. (TA equivalent)*

*We are in a typical dead-end job with no career and no chance of a career structure – we are constantly looking for other job opportunities. (Technician)*

*...Little opportunity for advancement due to part-time post and no one to supervise. (Technician)*

A similar small number (1%, n=10) felt aggrieved over the way they feel marginalised (Di).

*...No job descriptions, no support from staff within school....I have not been told who my line-managers are. I feel there should be more discussion about this, but seem to be talking to a wall every time I ask these questions. (Administrative)*

*I would love to feel part of a team at work.....I have never been asked to attend any meetings regarding school issues. ...I feel as though the job I do is taken for granted and I have never felt part of the school team. (Technician)*

Closely connected with the above are some 1% of all responses which mention how other staff treat them in various negative ways (Dii). A further 1% of responses refer to lack of understanding regarding the role of the support staff, particularly amongst teachers (Diii). Funding issues were the concern of a similar small number of respondents (Dix) (1%). The few comments about the remodelling process in their schools were weighted slightly to the negative side (Div , Dxi), totalling about 1% of all responses.

Of the remaining issues, about equal numbers of support staff are either dissatisfied with the appraisal system or lack of appropriate space and facilities (Dvi, Dx), each representing 1% of comments.

#### 5.6.5 Professional / job satisfaction

Responses in this category formed the second largest set, being 17% of all respondents. In line with the quantitative results seen above, the majority expressed positive opinions (Eii, Eiii, Ev), but there were a minority (7%) of all responses which reveal negative feelings.

The largest single category (Eii) contained responses which use a variety of terms to express how their work makes the respondents feel – valued, supported, respected, trusted, appreciated etc (6% of responses, n=41). These are all reflections of how the staff are treated by others in the school.

*... I do feel appreciated and trusted. The class teacher and head always say thank you ...* (TA equivalent)

*I have been given nothing but support, assistance and guidance... from the head of the school to class teachers.* (Technician)

*I consider myself very fortunate as I have a lot of support available....the staff...function very much as a team....I look forward to work and get a great deal of job satisfaction...* (Other pupil support)

*Much importance and attention has been paid to the job I currently occupy and for that xxx school should be congratulated and praised.* (Administrative)

The second set of positive comments (Eiii) expressed the intrinsic qualities of the working experience, rather than the extrinsic benefits derived from other people's reactions (5%, n=33).

*I really enjoy my job which is varied. No two days are the same.* (Administrative)

*I enjoy working in the school. I like to think I am trying to give the children a healthy meal which is very important.* (Facilities)

*I really love this job because no day or week is the same. I particularly enjoyed designing and making costumes for the school play...* (Technician)

The third form of positive comment is a single reference to how great the pupils were (Ev).

The remaining responses in this category were all expressions of dissatisfaction (Ei, Eiv). The larger set deals with how support staff felt others perceive or treat them (6%, n=41).

*I feel very dissatisfied about part of my job ...I have never received any real acknowledgement of what I achieved.* (TA equivalent)

*School secretaries / administrative are undervalued...* (Administrative)

*It is unfortunate that the governors of the school do not appreciate the expertise of the clerical staff. There is an understanding that if a member .....were to leave it does not matter, there are plenty other staff out there wishing to work in a school'. Eight members of the clerical staff have left during the two years...* (Administrative)

The small number of responses in (Eiv) expressed the feeling that their potential is being overlooked and wasted (1%,n=7).

*Would like to progress and be more involved and also have more responsibilities.* (Administrative)

*I feel that I am not allowed to fulfil my potential.* (Site)

#### 5.6.6 Analysis of responses by support staff group

Appendix 92 shows a wide range of numbers in each group, from 135 in the TA equivalent group to only 2 in the facilities staff group (32% and <1% of all respondents). Comparison of the responses from the various groups is therefore of limited validity, and needs to be treated cautiously, as

2 facilities staff cannot be taken as truly representative of all such staff. However, it is worth comparing the proportion of responses from each group with their relative proportions in the sample. This reveals that the proportions are very closely matched for most groups, so no one group is disproportionately represented in terms of the number of responses they made. However, facilities staff were omitted, as there were only 2 respondents. The percentage of each group's responses was taken as the indicator of the priority they give to any particular point. The top four 'scores' for the remaining groups are entered in Appendix 92 in order of priority. Analysis of the codes as a whole revealed that the order of priority for the top four codes is :

- (Ei) – low morale etc
- (Eii) – feeling valued
- (Bi) – pay/responsibilities mismatched
- (Eiii) – enjoy work

These are an interesting combination of the positive and the negative, with the negative given only slightly more priority across the 6 groups represented.

TA equivalent staff and technicians both gave top priority in their comments to the issue of their pay being out of line with their responsibilities (though TA equivalent staff also gave equal priority to feeling valued), whereas pupil welfare staff and other pupil support staff revealed that feeling valued was the most important point they wanted to make. Administrative staff were alone in giving such a high priority to excessive workload issues. The low state of morale was the second most important point made by technicians and administrative staff, with Other pupil support staff (with technicians) felt it was working beyond contracted hours. TA equivalent staff and technicians give second priority to their enjoyment of the work. Only two groups shared their third priority; enjoyment of work was placed third by TA equivalent and other pupil support staff. Interpretation of these results is difficult, particularly keeping in mind the wide variation in the numbers of staff represented in the 6 groups included (from 135 to 7).

## **5.7. Job satisfaction and school appreciation of work**

Having looked at the views and experiences of support staff in a general way, attention is now focused on two aspects of their view about their posts. These provide a more precise quantitative analysis of their job satisfaction and how much they felt appreciated by the school. For each of these two dimensions support staff were asked to tick one position on a five point scale: very satisfied, fairly satisfied, neither satisfied or dissatisfied, fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. The value of these data is that effects of school type, country, support staff group and other background factors can be examined more systematically.

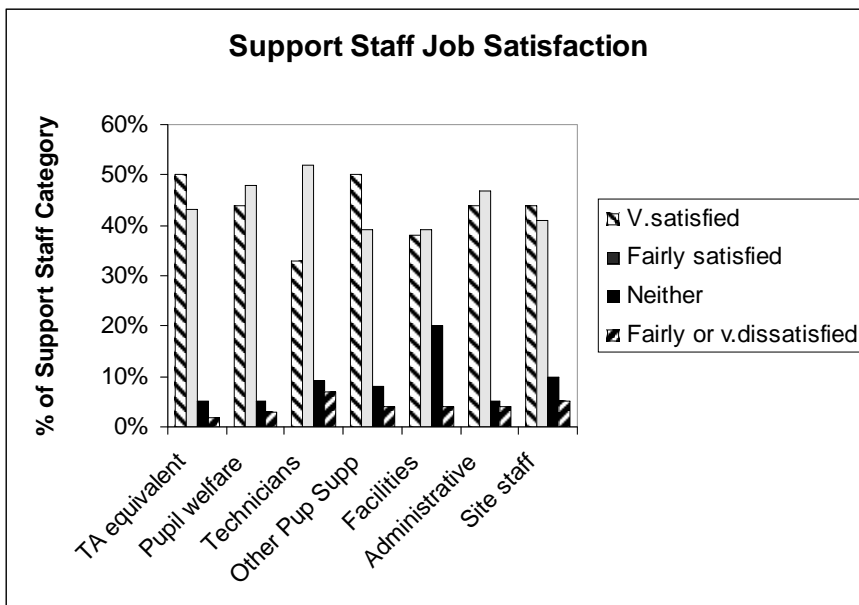
### **5.7.1 Job satisfaction**

The overwhelming view among support staff was positive (see Figures 7 and 8, and Appendix 93); 86% of respondents were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with their job. Facilities staff were the most neutral in their satisfaction about their jobs with 20% neither satisfied or dissatisfied. TA equivalent, pupil welfare and administrative staff were all very positive about their posts, though technicians were relatively more dissatisfied, with 7% either fairly or very dissatisfied. 5% of site staff and 4% of facilities staff were fairly dissatisfied. It is clear that these quantitative data showed a more positive and much less ambiguous picture than that emerging from the answers to the open ended question. Possible explanations for this are addressed below.

Figure 7. Satisfaction of support staff, for all staff and by country and school type



Figure 8. Satisfaction of support staff, by support staff category



Levels of satisfaction were similar in England and Wales but there were differences in relation to school type. Special school staff were the most satisfied (57% very satisfied, 37% fairly satisfied, i.e., 94% satisfied overall), and secondary school staff were the least satisfied (37% very satisfied, 49% fairly satisfied, i.e., 86% satisfied overall). (Primary schools: 49% very satisfied and 41% fairly satisfied, i.e., 90% satisfied overall.) Overall levels of dissatisfaction were therefore low.

### 5.7.2 Factors affecting job satisfaction

The factors that affected job satisfaction of support staff were examined (see Appendix 128). The results indicated that after adjusting for the effects of the other variables, there was an effect of type of support staff, number of full-time equivalent pupils, and staff qualification level on job satisfaction. TA equivalent and other pupil support staff were again found to be most satisfied, with facilities staff least satisfied. In addition, staff qualified above GCSE level were less satisfied than staff with a lower level of qualification. The results for the number of pupils indicated that staff in the

smaller (less than 500 pupils) and larger schools (more 1500 pupils) were most satisfied, while staff in medium sized schools (around 1000 pupils) were least satisfied.

### 5.7.3 School appreciation of work

Support staff were also very positive in terms of how much they felt the school appreciated their work (see Figures 9 and 10, and Appendix 95). More than two thirds (72%) felt the school appreciated their work (i.e., chose 4 or 5 on the scale), and only 7% expressed a negative view. Other pupil support staff were the most positive, with 42% feeling they were appreciated very much. Technicians and administrative staff seemed to have the most negative view – 14% in each category felt the school did not appreciate their work. Levels of appreciation were lowest in secondary schools (66% felt the school appreciated their work), and highest in special schools (79% said they were appreciated). In primary schools 74% said they were appreciated.

Figure 9. How much do support staff feel their school appreciates their work, for all staff and by country and school type?

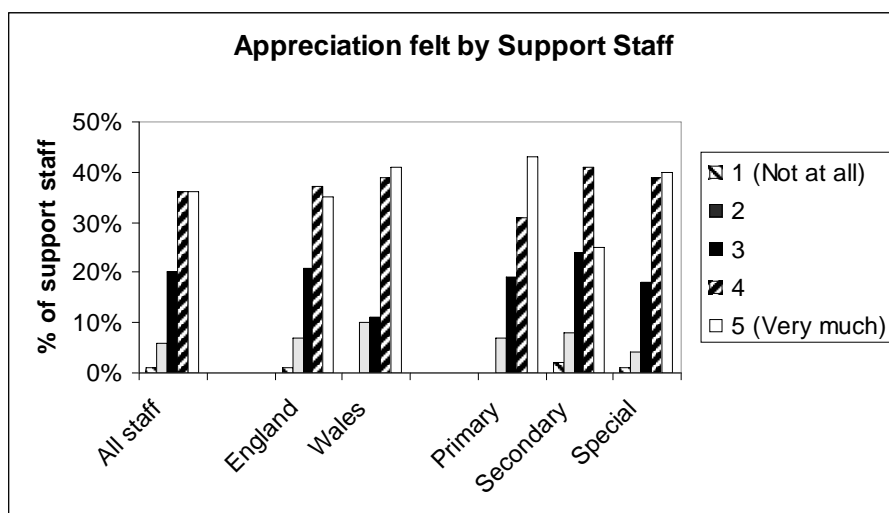
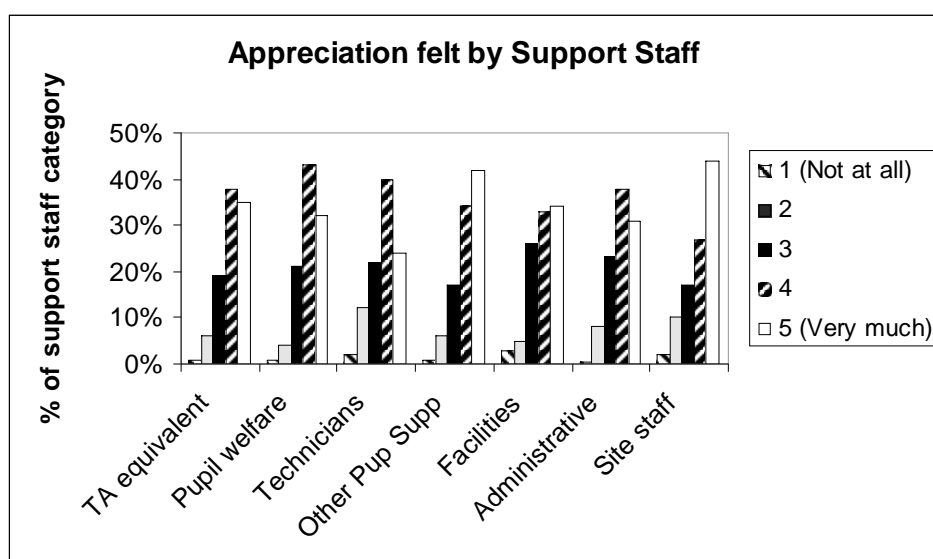


Figure 10. How much do support staff feel their school appreciates their work, by support staff category?



#### 5.7.4 Factors affecting perception of school appreciation

We then examined systematically which factors were affecting perceived appreciation by the school, and the results are shown in Appendix 96.

The results indicated that there was a significant interaction between the number of full-time equivalent pupils and support staff category. This suggests that the relationship between the number of pupils varies by type of support staff. For most post title groups the level of appreciation by the schools was lower in larger schools. The exception was for other pupil support and administrative staff for whom there was no association with appreciation.

Differences between support staff groups varied for schools with different numbers of pupils. However, for schools with an 'average' number of pupils, there were not found to be any significant differences between support staff groups

There was also a significant effect of area upon the level of appreciation, with support staff working in London and the East Midlands least likely to feel appreciated by the school. In addition, older support staff felt more appreciated by the school than younger support staff, and staff from minority ethnic groups felt less appreciated than white staff.

#### 5.7.5 Comment on support staff job satisfaction and views on their job

The comments reveal a number of views about the roles, tasks and responsibilities, which have coincided with the implementation of the National Agreement. It is not possible to say however that these views are directly the result of the National Agreement. Much will depend on the way in which the National Agreement is implemented in individual schools. It will be important to further address these findings with data from the case studies in Strand 2 of the project, in which we examine management practices and reactions to change at school level.

It might be helpful to draw together findings on support staff levels of job satisfaction and how much they felt appreciated by schools. We have seen that they were overwhelmingly positive. TA equivalent and other pupil support staff were the most satisfied with their posts, and facilities staff and technicians were the least satisfied. Other pupil support staff were also most likely to feel appreciated by their schools, and technicians and administrative staff the least likely. There were indications of differences between school types: job satisfaction and levels of appreciation were highest in special schools and lowest in secondary schools. However, after allowing for other factors in the multivariate analyses school type differences were not significant. Although the picture is predominantly positive, technicians therefore seem to be the most negative in terms of not feeling appreciated by the school and in terms of their professional satisfaction, and staff in special schools had the most professional satisfaction and feel most appreciated. There was a suggestion that many categories of support staff felt less appreciated in larger schools. In addition, staff qualified above GCSE level were less satisfied than staff with a lower level of qualification. Older support staff felt more appreciated, whilst staff from minority ethnic groups felt less appreciated by the school.

In this section we have analysed data from open ended and closed questions. One of the obvious points to emerge, when comparing results from the two forms of data, is that the former produce a much more positive picture about the support staff experience. There are several points to make here. The relatively low response rate to this question may mean that those with problems are the most likely to give extra additional written replies. The open ended sample may not therefore be representative of the large sample. The responses are not exactly comparable because the open question did not specifically ask for responses on the areas covered by the quantitative results. But it may also be that the two sets of responses are not necessarily contradictory. It may be that someone



gives a predominantly positive general judgment about job satisfaction, and being valued by the school, and yet they also they have some particular concerns they wish to voice.

### **Key findings from Chapter 5**

- To illustrate differences between the seven support staff groups in terms of their deployment in schools we calculated the 15 most common tasks. The overall percentage of tasks varied between support staff categories, showing a uniformity of activities for site and TA equivalent staff, not apparent in the case of 'other pupil support' staff and facilities staff - suggesting that these support staff groups conduct more diverse tasks.
- Staff in special schools spent more time supporting pupils and teachers than in secondary and primary schools. Secondary support staff were far less likely to support pupils. The low figure for secondary schools in terms of supporting pupils is not accounted for by a high figure for supporting teachers. TA equivalent support staff were most likely to directly support pupils and teachers. Technicians along with administrative staff were the only categories of support staff that spent noticeably more time supporting teachers than pupils.
- Most teachers said that at the time of survey (2004) they did not have allocated planning or feedback time with support staff they worked with in the classroom. There was noticeably less planning and feedback time in secondary schools and most in special schools. The majority of staff (85%) who had planning and feedback time were paid for it. Staff in England were more likely to be paid for planning and feedback time.
- The majority of teachers had no training to help them work with support staff in classrooms, 40% were involved in training support staff and most were not line managers of support staff. Teachers were more likely to be line managers of support staff in special schools and least in secondary schools.
- In response to an open invitation to give further information on their deployment in their schools, responses fell into five main categories: a description of their roles, tasks and responsibilities; respondents' feelings about their professional / job satisfaction with the majority expressing positive opinions; mostly negative comments about pay and conditions; comments on training / qualifications; and comments on management and staff relationships.
- Support staff were overwhelmingly positive in response to the two closed questions asking for them to indicate their level of job satisfaction and how much they felt appreciated by schools. TA equivalent and other pupil support staff were the most satisfied with their posts, and facilities staff and technicians were the least satisfied. 'Other pupil support' staff were also most likely to feel appreciated by their schools, and technicians and administrative staff the least likely.

## **6. Impact of support staff on pupils and teachers.**

The main research on the impact of support staff on pupils and teachers will be undertaken in Strand 2 of the research. However, it was possible in Strand 1 to obtain information on several aspects of the impact of support staff.

### **6.1 Impact on routine administrative and clerical tasks**

One approach to assessing the impact of support staff on teachers was to see whether routine administrative and clerical tasks had been affected, especially given that Phase 1 of the National Agreement required that these tasks be transferred to support staff from September 2003. In one section of the TQ, distributed in the Autumn term 2004, we presented teachers with a list of routine and clerical tasks and asked them to say for each task which they still carried out.

Overall, most tasks were still performed by the teachers (see Appendix 110). Those tasks still likely to be done by the teacher (more than 60% of teachers) were record keeping, filing, classroom display, processing exam results, collating pupil reports, administering work experience, administering examinations, ordering supplies and equipment, stocktaking, cataloguing, preparing equipment and materials, minuting meetings, coordinating and submitting bids, seeking personnel advice, managing pupil data and inputting pupil data. Those tasks not now still performed by teachers (more than 60%) were analysing attendance figures, and commissioning new ICT equipment.

These results require care in interpretation. It may be that the figures reflect the previous situation - teachers may not previously have carried out these last two tasks. More generally, answers to this question may underestimate the impact of support staff in that tasks may still be performed or directed by teachers but they may have passed some aspects on to support staff. In this sense teachers may be still associated with tasks such as classroom displays, but through organising them rather than actually putting materials up. As with other answers, it will be helpful to compare results to those in questionnaires returned in future years, to see what changes have been taking place over time.

Examination of differences between school types suggests that collating pupil reports and administering work experience are still performed by teachers in primary and special schools, but have been handed over to support staff in secondary schools, though once again we cannot be sure this does not reflect previous practice. There was a similar picture for all other tasks.

Teachers were also asked to note which of these tasks were now performed by other staff. As would be expected, to a large extent results showed the converse picture to that just described (see Appendix 111). Most tasks were not performed by other staff. Those that were performed by other staff included chasing absences, bulk photocopying, analysing attendance figures, ICT trouble shooting, and commissioning new ICT equipment.

### **6.2 Impact of support staff on teachers' job satisfaction, stress and workload**

In the TQ we asked five questions concerning the impact of support staff. Three of these required a closed answer and provided the basis for a quantitative analysis of teachers' levels of job satisfaction, levels of stress and workload. The other two questions covered effects on pupil learning and behaviour and on teaching, and answers were open ended. We first present results from the three quantitative analyses.

In the first question teachers were asked to describe how the member of support staff identified by them had affected their level of job satisfaction. The answers are displayed graphically in Figure 11

and 12, and full results are in Appendix 112. They show a largely positive effect. For all categories of support staff about a quarter of teachers (23%) said that there had been a large increase in satisfaction and a third (34%) said that there had been a slight increase – a total of 57% who said that their satisfaction had increased. A third (37%) had experienced no change with only 7% experiencing a slight or large decrease (see Figure 11).

There appeared to be more positive impact on teacher satisfaction in England compared to Wales (59% vs. 42% slight and large increase) and this was attributable to more teachers in Wales reporting that there had been no change (53% vs. 35%). There was less increase in satisfaction in special schools (48% slight and large increase) compared to secondary (62%) and primary schools (55%), though in line with other results described in this report this may be attributable to the situation in special schools being already further advanced in terms of support staff effects.

Figure 11. How support staff have affected teachers’ level of job satisfaction, for all staff and by country and school type

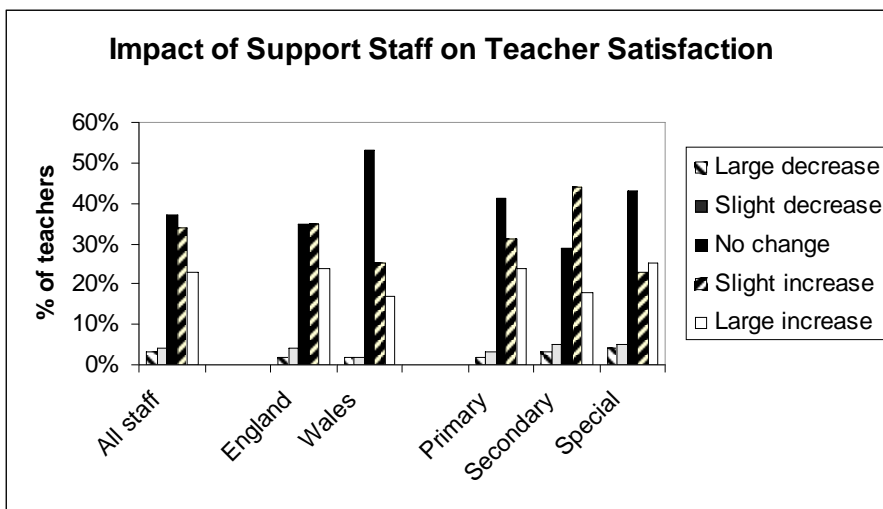
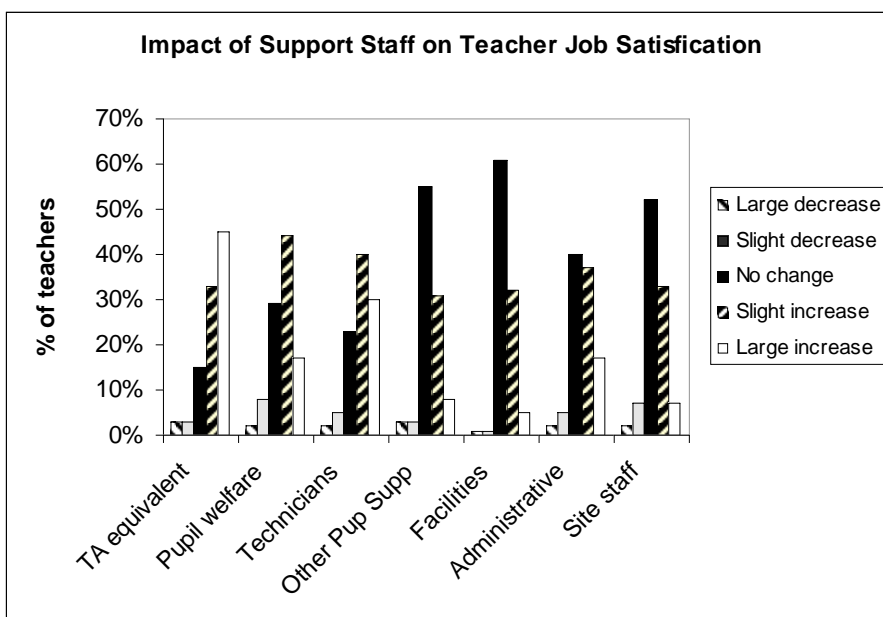


Figure 12. How support staff have affected teachers’ level of job satisfaction, by support staff category



There were highly statistically significant differences between support staff categories (see Figure 12). As might be expected, those support staff who worked more closely in the classroom seemed to have the most effect – especially TA equivalent, followed by technicians – and those with responsibilities out of the classroom like facilities and site staff least.

It seems that if the support staff work in a capacity in which they are more likely to make a large positive difference on teachers' job satisfaction, then they are also likely to be the ones who can make a large negative difference. TA equivalent staff were those most likely to be cited as being responsible for both a large increase and a large decrease in job satisfaction. This may well be because of the particularly close working relationship that TAs and similar staff have with teachers. They often spend a lot of time together and are required to work as a team, and it is therefore important that they work well together. However, it must be remembered that the number of negative remarks were very low in all cases. With the exception of the TA equivalent staff, none of the percentage figures for 'large decrease' reached double figures.

Technicians were those most likely to be responsible for an increase in job satisfaction (after the TAs) and were third on the list for causing a large decrease. A similar pattern was found for the pupil welfare staff – 3<sup>rd</sup> on the list for satisfaction but fourth for dissatisfaction. Administration and other pupil support staff were 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> on the list respectively for increasing job satisfaction. The relatively higher ranking of the administrative staff could be considered to be a result of their ability to reduce the teacher workload (as shown later) whilst the lower rank of the other pupil support staff is more likely to be due to the lack of contact they have with the teachers. Facilities staff, namely the cleaners, cooks and other catering staff were those most likely to be cited as being responsible for 'no change' in job satisfaction with little positive or negative impact. This probably reflects the small amount of contact they tend to have with teachers. The one type of staff not conforming to this pattern were the site staff; whilst having little positive effect on job satisfaction were second most likely to be responsible for a large decrease. There is no evidence as to why this might be the case but it may be that whilst the work of a caretaker or site supervisor can be taken for granted by teachers, if the work is not done well, or the teacher's requests or expectations are not met, then this may cause some level of dissatisfaction.

The next question asked how this type of support staff had affected their levels of stress (see Figures 13 and 14, and Appendix 113). Just over half of teachers (56%) said that support staff had led to a slight or large decrease. There were few differences in relation to school type. Teachers in England reported more decrease in stress compared to teachers in Wales (58% vs. 42) and this was because teachers in Wales were far more likely to report there had been no change in stress (54% vs. 34%).

There were highly significant differences between support staff categories. Once again support staff with a more direct role in the classroom had the most positive effect. TA equivalent staff and technicians had most effect (72% and 71% respectively had led to a slight or large decrease). However, administrative staff also had a positive effect in terms of a slight and large decrease in teacher stress (62%). Very few teachers stated that the staff were responsible for a large increase in their own stress levels (1%). In pure percentage terms, the highest figure was that of the site staff (2%) but this represented just 3 staff. The percentage figures for those causing a slight increase in stress levels was higher (8% overall), with other pupil support staff the highest (12%) followed by facilities staff (9%), but this is still low in comparison to the positive effect they had.

Figure 13. How support staff have affected teachers' level of stress, for all staff and by country and by school type

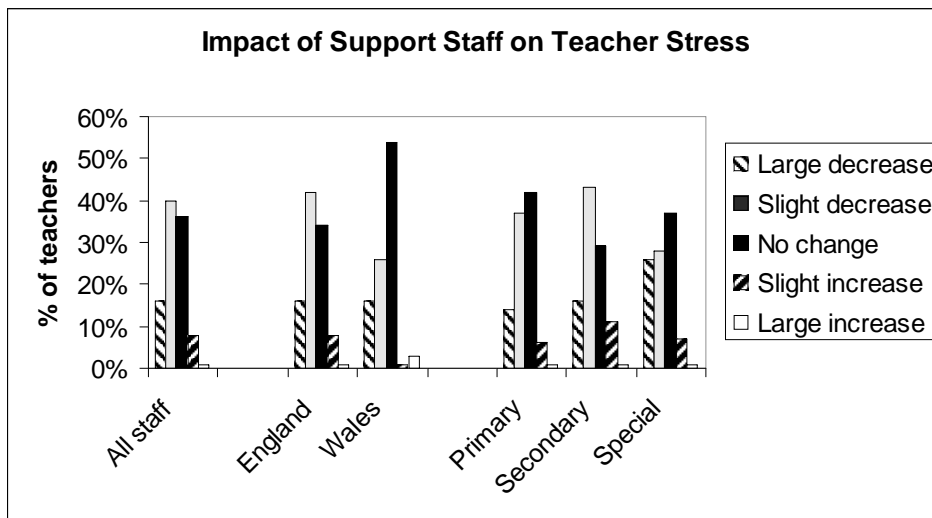
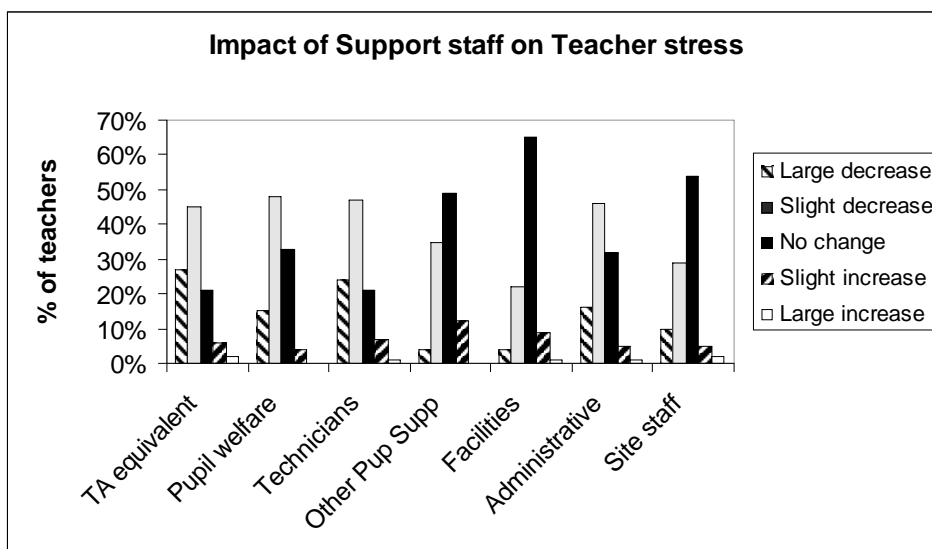


Figure 14. How support staff have affected teachers' level of stress, by support staff category



The types of staff most likely to cause a large decrease in stress were very close to those likely to cause a large increase in job satisfaction. TA equivalent staff and technicians were again the two most likely categories of support staff most likely to reduce stress, whilst facilities staff were the least likely.

The third question asked how this type of support staff had affected the teacher's workload (see Figures 15 and 16, and Appendix 114). Results on reductions in workload were still positive though less pronounced. Only 46% now said that support staff had led to reduced workload, though this varied a lot between categories of support staff. Administrative staff (70%) and technicians (62%) had had most effect on work loads in terms of a large or slight decrease, with technicians most likely to have brought about a large decrease (20%). For the first time the TA equivalent staff do not come top of the positive list, being ranked third for a large decrease in teachers' workload. On the other hand, facilities, site, and other pupil support staff had less effect on workloads. There were few differences between school types, but teachers in England reported more decrease in workload than

teachers in Wales (47% vs. 33%) – once again this was largely because teachers in Wales were more likely to say there had been no change in workload.

There is therefore a consistent difference between teachers in England and Wales, with teachers in Wales much more likely to say that support staff had not led to any effects on teacher job satisfaction, and levels of stress and workload. It is unclear why this might be the case, though we return to country differences in Chapter 8.

Figure 15: How support staff have affected teachers' level of workload, for all staff and by country and school type

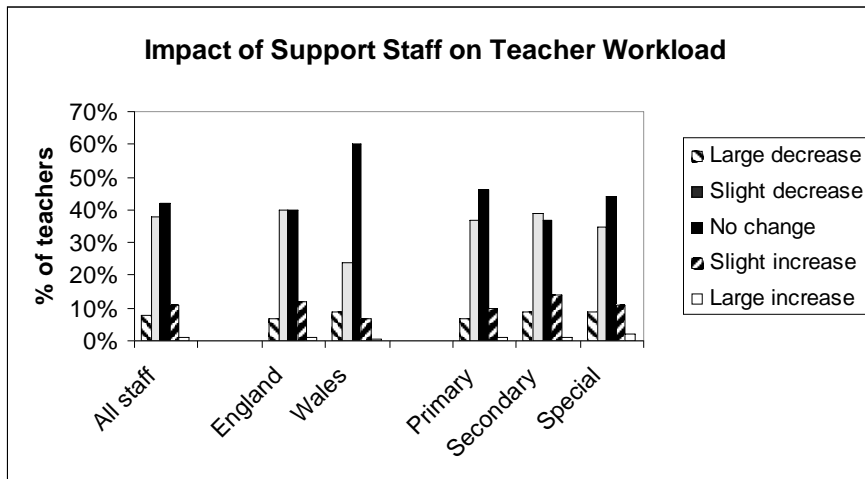
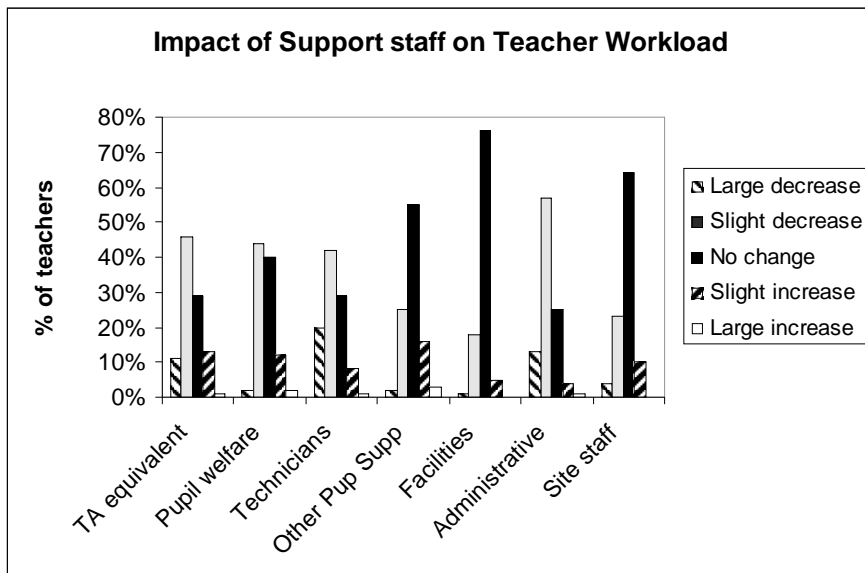


Figure 16. How support staff have affected teachers' level of workload, by support staff category



Interestingly, 12% of teachers reported that support staff had led to slight or in a few cases large increases in workload. Other pupil support staff in particular (19%), followed by TA equivalent (14%) and pupil welfare (14%) had resulted in a slight or large increase in workloads. This may again reflect difficulties that can arise when working closely with staff. It is not clear why other pupil support staff might be responsible for causing an increase. This fairly diverse group includes cover supervisors and it may therefore be partly attributable to having to prepare and leave work for the classes they will cover. This group also includes midday staff and sometimes teachers can find

themselves dealing with problems when pupils return to the classroom. However, numbers of support staff creating a large increase in workload were very low.

These results on increases in workload will need to be looked at again over time. It may be that increased workload is an initial and therefore temporary consequence of new working practices and it will be possible to document this in future surveys conducted for the project. In Strand 2 of the project it will also be possible to look more closely at the nature of management and supervisory arrangements in schools to see how change is being handled.

One possibility is that teachers will differ in the extent to which they have been affected by support staff. In order to see whether a more senior position, with responsibility for school management, affected perceptions of the effect of support staff, teachers were split into two groups. The first group consisted of 'senior' staff consisting of teachers who were either a headteacher, deputy head, head of year or head of department. The second group consisted of the remaining teachers. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of how support staff affected the amount of satisfaction, stress and workloads of teachers.

Overall, then, teachers felt that support staff had a positive effect on their level of job satisfaction and reduced levels of stress. Effects in terms of reductions in workload were less pronounced though still positive. Those support staff who worked more closely in the classroom tended to have the most positive effect on satisfaction and reduced levels of stress – especially TA equivalent, followed by technicians. In a few cases support staff who worked closely with teachers could have a large negative effect. Administrative staff were unusual in that they do not have a direct interactive role in the classroom but had the most positive effect on decreasing teacher workload and a positive effect on reducing levels of stress.

### **6.3 Impact of support staff on pupil learning, behaviour and teaching**

In the TQ, teachers were asked to answer questions about two support staff who worked for or with them. They were asked if possible to select different types of support staff rather than those who carried out similar roles. For each of these two support staff the teachers were asked two open questions: 1. "Please describe how the support provided by this type of support staff has affected pupil learning and behaviour" and 2. "Please describe how the support provided by this type of support has affected your teaching."

Numbers of teachers who commented on each support staff category are shown in Appendix 115 for the question about effects on pupil learning and behaviour, and Appendix 117 for the question about effects on teaching. A coding frame was developed for both questions (see Appendix 119), but both sets of answers were put into the same framework since many of the answers covered the same areas. There were a great many comments made over a wide range of subjects with many teachers describing several ways in which the support staff affected pupil behaviour and teaching. The full tables for both questions are in Appendix 116 and 118. Only those coding categories which elicited 50 or more responses will be discussed here.

#### *6.3.1 Impact of support staff on pupil learning and behaviour*

##### 6.3.1.1 Brings specialist help

The most common category (125 responses, 18% of responses) detailed ways in which support staff were able to bring specialist help to the teacher and into the classroom. This was expertise not normally expected of the teacher, e.g. play, technology, counselling, work placements, careers advice, exams, school visits, maintenance and cleaning. Also included here was help with equipment,

hardware, computers, resources and materials. Other help covered jobs not normally carried out by teachers such as cleaning or electrical maintenance work.

The following quotes are from teachers and in brackets we name the role of the support staff commented on.

*Good- help pupils to air their worries.* (Nurse, Secondary)

*Better supervision at playtime.* (Midday Assistant, Special)

*Providing me with information regarding lateness/effort/grades.* (Admin/Clerk, Secondary)

*Classrooms are clean, 'lost' items are often found by the cleaner. He always checks electrical items - wires/plugs regularly. Mends pieces of equipment.* (Cleaner, Primary)

*There is always someone in the library to respond to requests for information, books, resources, whether they be staff or pupils.* (Librarian, Secondary)

#### 6.3.1.2 Better attitude and motivation

One of the largest set of comments by 115 teachers (16.4%) concerned ways in which pupils' attitudes had profited from working with support staff. Areas included here were gains in confidence, motivation, pride in their work and improved social skills.

*Given confidence to students who have little or no English.* (Language Assistant, Primary)

*Pupils skills have improved ..... and so has their confidence in relating to a wider set of people (not strangers, of course).* (Midday Supervisor, Special)

*It has enhanced their learning by increasing their self esteem. They thrive in a situation where they are given daily support at their level.* (HLTA, Primary)

*Enabled children to improve social skills & interact with other children.* (LSA (for SEN), Primary)

#### 6.3.1.3 Better learning

The third most frequent (13.4%, 94 teachers) category showed that the support staff affected pupil learning, understanding or misconceptions, although they were rarely specific as to which area of learning was affected.

*Production of better resources has improved learning.* (Reprographics Technician, Secondary)

*Improvement in learning.* (Midday Supervisor, Primary)

*Students supported in this way feel valued and this has a knock-on effect on their learning and behaviour.* (Learning Mentor, Secondary)



*It has enriched learning in ICT particularly through other subjects, e.g. science / maths lessons. (Other ICT Support Staff, Primary)*

However, a further 4% (29) of the teachers did comment that specific areas of pupil attainment had improved.

*There is an improvement in reading age - which positively impacts on the rest of the curriculum. (Language Assistant, Primary)*

*Enhanced computer skills. (ICT Technician, Primary)*

*The support given by NNEBs has improved pupil levels. (Nursery Nurse, Special)*

*Development in literacy skills and vocabulary extended. (Therapist, Secondary)*

#### 6.3.1.4 Better behaviour

The fourth category (92 teachers, 13.1%) commented specifically on the positive impact that the support staff had on the pupils' discipline, social skills or behaviour. This was often related to the effect upon pupils' learning.

*Supports behaviour – she keeps them calm ready for afternoon learning. (Midday Supervisor, Primary)*

*She has a great effect on the behaviour of pupils at lunch time. All serious incidents are referred to her by Midday Assistants. (Midday Supervisor, Primary)*

*Many students have turned around their behavior and this has had a positive effect of learning and the learning of peers. (Learning Mentor, Special)*

*Behaviour is far better under close supervision. (Teaching Assistant, Primary)*

#### 6.3.1.5 No effect on behaviour or learning

A further category was negative in that 8.4% (59) teachers said that the support staff mentioned had no effect upon behaviour and learning

*Behaviour - no effect. (Language Assistant, Secondary)*

*Little effect on behaviour. (Teaching Assistant, Secondary)*

*Not a great deal. Given them time to work individually on the computer. No real learning gone on. (Learning Mentor, Primary)*

*Not at all. (Admin/Clerk, Secondary)*

By way of summary of this section, teachers felt that support staff had a beneficial effect on pupil learning and behaviour. The main ways that support staff affected learning and behaviour were in terms of:

1. Bringing specialist help to the teacher and into the classroom, e.g., in terms of skills in technology, counselling, careers advice, equipment and resources

2. Affecting pupils' attitudes, e.g., in terms of confidence, motivation, pride in their work and improved social skills
3. Helping pupils' understanding or misconceptions
4. Having a positive impact on the pupils' discipline, social skills or behaviour. Fewer than 10% of comments can be seen as less positive in that teachers said that the support staff mentioned had no effect upon behaviour and learning.

### 6.3.2 Impact of support staff on teaching

#### 6.3.2.1 Affects amount of teaching

The largest number of comments were about how the support staff had enabled the teachers to be able to concentrate more on their teaching. They felt they had more time to teach, both the whole class and a wider range of pupils. Very often the comments reflected the view that the teachers felt that they had been 'freed up' to work with other pupils whilst the support staff worked with pupils with special educational needs.

*Her efficiency has enabled me to concentrate on my teaching responsibilities.* (Finance Officer, Primary)

*Frees me up to teach children rather than finding pencils or doing mundane tasks.* (Classroom Assistant, Primary)

*Allows me to spread my time throughout the class not concentrating on just one pupil.* (Language Assistant, Secondary)

*Allows me to get on with my teaching and able to focus on the rest of the class.* (Nursery Nurse, Primary)

*Enables me to work with other groups, not just SEN group.* (Classroom Assistant, Primary)

*Once all introductory work has been delivered by teacher to all children, I know that the poorest ability children will get that extra time/care/attention from the LSP whilst I focus on the rest of the class.* (Nursery Nurse, Primary)

#### 6.3.2.1 Brings specialist help

The second largest number of comments (100 responses, 14.6%) were once again about the expertise that members of support staff were able to supply to the teachers and the pupils. The teachers appreciated having another adult on whom they could call to sort out their problems or to ask advice. In some cases they felt their teaching was better because of this support.

*Without her input, I would have pitched my teaching sessions too high and the children would not have been able to access them. The children are vocalising for the first time - very rewarding.* (Therapist, Primary)

*Helped me to plan work experience. .... Established a good network of contacts. Helped students with Progress Files.* (Connexions Personal Adviser, Special)

*Helps with areas of ICT teaching I am unfamiliar with. Sorts out any technical hitches!* (ICT Technician, Primary)

*Career interviews can affect vocational input.* (Librarian, Secondary)

#### 6.3.2.3 Affects quality of teaching

10% of teachers (71) felt that the quality of their teaching had improved as a result of support staff. They also felt they had the support within the class to try a more varied style of teaching which without the help they would not have risked. Some teachers also felt that they were able to move the work on at a faster pace since they did not have to spend as much time with individual pupils and that the work could be differentiated. Students could be challenged and they could experiment more in their teaching and take more risks.

*Allowed me to trial several different methods of teaching with confidence.* (Other ICT Support Staff, Secondary)

*Teacher able to focus more time on developing varied teaching strategies.* (Art & or Design Technician, Secondary)

*Quicker pace.* (Nursery Nurse, Primary)

*As a teacher, I am then more likely to take more risks in my teaching.* (Learning Mentor, Secondary)

*Updated facilities to lead to wider range of teaching styles.* (Caretaker, Secondary)

#### 6.3.2.4/5 No effects on teaching and not applicable

There were 2 categories comprising over 50 comments each which either stated there was negligible effect upon teaching (68, 9.9%) or considered the question inappropriate for the type of staff being discussed (65, 9.5%). Those comments were mainly about the facilities, other pupil support, administrative and site staff.

*It hasn't.* (Admin/Clerk, Primary)

*Not really affected it.* (Cover Supervisor, Secondary)

*Doesn't affect it.* (Midday Assistant, Special)

*Not enough help to affect teaching.* (Teaching Assistant, Primary)

#### 6.3.2.6 More time for planning

Some teachers (66 or 9.6%) said that having support staff to help them facilitated planning and preparing for lessons, they had more time to do the work and the support staff were able to contribute ideas and help in preparation. The teaching assistants, technicians and administration staff were particularly helpful in this area.

*We get activities prepared quicker and can put more time and effort into them.* (Nursery Nurse, Primary)

*Preparation of activities frees me up to plan.* (Classroom Assistant, Primary)

*I am able to concentrate more on the content and preparation of lessons. I have someone to discuss the children with and this aids my planning. (Classroom Assistant, Primary)*

*Helped organise my planning. Better prepared. (Reprographics Technician, Secondary)*

*Frees more time for lesson preparation. (Office Manager, Primary)*

*Has made my job easier by allowing me the time to prepare. (Therapist, Special)*

*Better planning. (ICT Network Manager, Secondary)*

#### 6.3.2.7 Takes on admin / routine work

The relief of many of the staff (65 or 9.5% of teachers) that they were no longer burdened with administrative tasks or routine tasks like photocopying was clear in many of the responses. They felt that they were more effective and able to do other things because there were others doing these tasks for them.

*I have more time to plan etc - and not worry about the queue at the photocopier. Jobs you "put off" because not seen as directly related to teaching do get done - facilitates display which motivates staff & children. (Admin/Clerk, Primary)*

*My photocopying is all organised and done ready. (Classroom Assistant, Primary)*

*Makes me more effective. Speeds up the number of pupils I can find when I need them. (Receptionist, Secondary)*

*Can concentrate on teaching more and not boring admin tasks. (Cover Supervisor, Secondary)*

*Extra time to concentrate on actual teaching not preparing worksheets or making displays. (HLTA, Primary)*

*I don't spend my time writing all the letters, or booking coaches etc so can spend time on other tasks. (Bursar, Primary)*

#### 6.3.2.8 Allows individualisation / differentiation

59 of the teachers (8.6%) said that the work of the support staff allowed them to differentiate the work for more pupils and support more individual pupils and smaller groups than had been done before. They were able to target the pupils who needed the help and ensure that all ability levels were catered for.

*It enables me to listen to individual reading and devote more time for individual pupils. (Nursery Nurse, Primary)*

*Teaching is more effective, smaller groups can be taught simultaneously. Students with problems can be dealt with 1-1 while the group is still being taught. (HLTA, Special)*

*I am able to ensure that differentiation in my planning is carried out to meet the needs of the pupils. (LSA (for SEN pupils), Primary)*

*Able to differentiate more effectively, make time for individual/group observations.*  
(Nursery Nurse, Primary)

*Children are able to follow a structured plan of work differentiated for their ability.*  
(Other ICT Support Staff, Primary)

Overall, then, teachers felt that support staff had benefited their teaching in a number of ways. The largest number of comments were about how support staff had enabled more time to teach and work with pupils whilst support staff could work with pupils with special educational needs. This was followed by comments on the expertise that members of support staff were able to supply to the teachers and the pupils, and the way that they could be called on to sort out problems or give advice; the way that the quality of their own teaching had improved as a result of the support staff, e.g., through allowing a more varied style of teaching, a faster pace of teaching (because they did not have to spend as much time with individual pupils), and the ability to make teaching more challenging and take more risks; the way that support staff facilitated planning and preparing for lessons, and contributed ideas and help in preparation (teaching assistants, technicians and administration staff were particularly helpful in this area); the important way in which teachers were no longer tied down with such routine tasks as administration work and photocopying, and subsequent way they were then able to do other things; and finally that the work of the support staff allowed teachers to differentiate the work for more pupils, targeting the pupils who needed help and ensuring that all ability levels were catered for.

### **Key findings from Chapter 6**

- Overall, most tasks were still performed by the teachers, particularly record keeping, filing, classroom display, processing exam results, collating pupil reports, administering work experience, administering examinations, ordering supplies and equipment, stocktaking, cataloguing, preparing equipment and materials, minuting meetings, coordinating and submitting bids, seeking personnel advice, managing pupil data and inputting pupil data. Care is required in interpreting these results.
- From the teachers' perspective, support staff had a positive effect on their level of job satisfaction. Support staff who work closely with teachers were most likely to have a large positive effect on teachers' job satisfaction, but can also in a few cases have a large negative difference.
- There was a similar positive view about the effect that support staff had in reducing levels of stress, and again support staff with a more direct role in the classroom had the most effect. The types of staff most likely to cause a large decrease in stress are very close to those likely to cause a large increase in job satisfaction. TA equivalent staff and the technicians were again the two categories most likely to reduce stress, whilst facilities staff were the least likely.
- Results on reductions in work loads were still positive though less pronounced. Only 46% now said that support staff had led to reduced workload, though this varied a lot between categories of support staff. Administrative staff and technicians had had most effect on workloads, with technicians most likely to have had brought about a large decrease. Facilities, site, and other pupil support staff had less effect on workloads.
- Most teachers felt that support staff had a beneficial effect on pupil learning and behaviour. The main ways that support staff affected learning and behaviour were in terms of:

1. Bringing specialist help to the teacher and into the classroom, e.g., in terms of skills in technology, counselling, careers advice, equipment and resources
  2. Affecting pupils' attitudes, e.g., in terms of confidence, motivation, pride in their work and improved social skills
  3. Helping pupils' understanding or misconceptions
  4. Having a positive impact on the pupils' discipline, social skills or behaviour.
- Teachers felt that support staff had benefited their teaching in a number of ways: enabling teachers to concentrate more on their teaching, bringing expertise to teachers and pupils, improving the quality of teachers' teaching, facilitating planning and preparing for lessons, and freeing teachers from routine tasks; and allowing teachers to differentiate the work for more pupils.

## **7. Headteacher views on changes to the deployment of support staff over the school year 2003/4**

At the end of the MSQ there was an open question which asked for any information headteachers would care to give us on changes to the deployment of support staff over the previous 12 months (i.e., the year prior to the summer term 2004), for example, by asking support staff to take on a wider range of tasks (as in Phase 1 of the National Agreement), or new support roles in the school, including work that was formerly done by teachers.

Of the 2318 questionnaires returned, 1331 (or 57%) contained a response to this open question. There were 155 responses from Welsh schools (12% of the total number of responses), with the remaining 1176 (88%) coming from schools in England. All the responses were transcribed and then a sub-sample examined independently by two members of the research team. As a result, it was agreed that responses could be classified in terms of seven main sets of codes and sub-codes within sets. A sample of transcripts were then independently coded by the two members of the team and a high degree of coding agreement was found.

It needs to be remembered that the survey was conducted at a relatively early stage in the process of remodelling, and that significant changes are likely to have taken place in schools since the summer term 2004. However, the report describes an extensive analysis of responses from well over 1000 schools and as far as we are aware this forms by far the largest account of initial changes to the deployment of support staff. The results in this section can be seen as a descriptive baseline by which to assess changes described in future surveys.

As only just over a half of schools responded to this question, we cannot rule out the possibility that they might differ from non-respondents in their views and in their experience of change. However, examination of responses showed that views and experiences varied quite widely within the sample of respondents – for example in terms of the type and degree of change and the degree to which they felt positive about changes – and so we have no clear reason to assume this is a biased sample

Results are expressed in terms of the number and percentage of special, primary and secondary schools who gave a response that was allocated to a particular code. The respondents' answers could be coded in terms of more than one code – for example they may have mentioned several different ways that tasks had been reallocated to support staff. This means that the main and sub categories were not mutually exclusive, and that sub totals of responses and percentages could therefore exceed the number of schools. This is why totalling percentages within a sub-set can exceed 100%. However, in order to give an account of the relative prevalence of the main categories we have also calculated the percentage of all responses (which exceeds the number of schools). All results are given in Appendix 120. References to the category codes found in the appendix are left in the text for ease of reference for readers who wish to explore results further.

### **7.1 Results**

There were two main sets of responses to this open ended question from the MSQ, and they were evenly divided between references at a general level to how far the National Agreement had produced changes, and to details of tasks and roles which had changed. These two types of descriptive responses therefore formed 84% of the total number. That these constituted the bulk of answers is to be expected as they cover aspects explicitly referred to in the question. In the other 16% of responses there were views on the role of support staff regarding teaching and learning and on the National Agreement in general, reference to budgetary issues and identification of problems encountered with the National Agreement.

7.1.1 The degree of change over the past year (covering the first phase of teacher contractual reform from September 2003 and prior to this)

Examination of responses showed that schools varied in terms of the degree of changes that had taken place. Further examination showed that these responses could be organised in terms of a scale, with no change, or where changes had already happened, at one end, through to a fundamental restructuring or review of support staff, at the other end of the scale. 42% of all responses were categorised in terms of the degree of change over the last year. The most common response was a reference to ways that some or all of the 24/25 tasks had been allocated (57% of all schools). This was followed by reference to new staff or posts being created (20% of schools) and new job descriptions, new status in the schools or new contracts (19%). Less frequently mentioned were responses at either end of the scale of change, that is, it has happened already or there has been no change or the school is reviewing all or most support staff posts.

There were differences between types of school. A larger proportion (14%) of special schools reported no change (code A ii) in the last 12 months, compared with secondary (1%) and primary (6%). In addition, there was a larger proportion of special schools (14%) than primary (6%) and secondary (8%), which reported that change had already happened, prior to the agreement being implemented (Ai).

*It was already common practice in special school settings for LSAs to complete routine admin tasks. (Special)*

*No real change in the last 12 months, as Special Schools have always used Teaching Assistants to meet a range of pupils' needs alongside teaching staff. (Special)*

*None – we have always worked in the ways that workforce reforms are suggesting. (Primary)*

*As yet support staff do not carry out work formerly done by teachers. (Primary)*

This suggests the influence of the organisation of special schools, which has long been established (we return to this point below).

The intention to introduce changes (Aiii) was more prevalent in secondary schools (17%), than in special (7%) and primary (7%). This might reflect the greater size and complexity of support staff deployment in secondary schools.

*This is currently being reviewed by SMT & Governors. A new support staff structure with new roles / job descriptions will be put in place during the Autumn term 2004, in line with LEA's recommendations. (Special)*

*The majority of the `24' tasks are currently done at leadership level. This is to change with the appointment of 3 admin staff over the Summer Holidays. We have a surplus of LSAs who will train for new roles. The examination office (teacher) has resigned and we have taken the opportunity to move this work to admin. Similarly teaching staff provide lunchtime cover which needs to move to support staff. We envisage major changes over the next twelve months. (Secondary)*

*Significant changes, due to workforce remodelling/single status job evaluation in pipeline. Would like to appoint a premises manager and office manager as part of workforce remodelling when current postholders retire/vacancies occur. (Primary)*



The greatest contrast in the responses of the different school types concerned tasks identified for reallocation to support staff (Aiv). Only 15% of special schools reported that some or all such tasks have been re-allocated, compared with 64% of primary and 61% of secondary.

The creation of new posts with the appointment of new staff (Avii) featured more often in secondary schools than elsewhere (43%, compared with 12% in primaries and 11% in special schools.) The size of schools and the size of their budgets may have provided headteachers of secondary schools with more flexibility in engaging new staff to fill newly created posts.

*Recruited an LSA specifically to work and organise Learning Resources. (Special)*

*We have recruited more support staff specifically to help with filing, data input, handling money, collating reports, etc, in line with the national agreement to reduce teacher workload. We have also re-deployed a member of the support staff to work full-time on exam administration. She has been replaced by a general secretary. We have taken on 2 Study Supervisors to reduce the amount of cover done by teachers. (Secondary)*

*School has recently appointed one full-time classroom assistant to help cover the 24 points from the workload agreement. She collects all money; helps with photocopying; helps with displays; any work given by teachers (i.e. phone calls re. trip arrangements etc.). At present working well. (Primary)*

One of the ways in which schools were changing was to increase the hours that some or all support staff carried out their roles (Av). In some schools roles taking up little time were being added together and the hours of staff already in post were being increased to take on the extra tasks. In other cases the hours were extended to allow teachers and in-class support staff to plan and share feedback together during contracted time, rather than on a 'voluntary' basis.

*We have, by voluntary agreement, increased the hours worked by some Teaching Assistants. This enables them to carry out work formerly done by teachers & to become more involved in the running of the school / level of responsibility, etc. (Special)*

*Lunch supervisors extension of duties – extended hours to include morning break duties & admin help for departments. (Secondary)*

*LSAs/TAs are working overtime hours to: put up displays, log & collate data, prepare materials for staff, attend planning meetings. (Primary)*

Also mentioned were changes to the job descriptions, contracts or status of some support staff (A vi). Such changes may have included regrading of posts according to guidelines set out by the LA, changes in salary, post title and status, as well as new and / or greater responsibilities.

*Workforce Remodelling agenda precipitated significant change. Arrangements had to be devised which would meet the contractual changes introduced in Sept.03 and in anticipation of Sept.04. The requirement to provide effective cover for absent teachers without recourse to expensive and grossly unsatisfactory Teacher Agencies has been a driving force. Raft of 'new' jobs created/renegotiated with existing staff with significantly different Job Descriptions. (Special)*

*All TAs now carry out the designated '24 tasks' with the exception of ICT technical support. One TA has become an administrative assistant to support teacher's*

*bureaucratic workload. TAs roles will change significantly when they move to a new career structure/pay-scale in September 2004. (Primary)*

*Our teaching assistant has taken on a more varied job description. She does not just work with Reception/Yr 1, but now works in all classes. She has a more responsible job and is responding to the challenge. (Primary)*

Another reaction to remodelling (or perhaps the impetus it provided for job evaluation alongside developments through the NJC) was initiation of a review of all or most of the support staff roles and their place in the schools' structures (A viii). This represented the most comprehensive response to change. However, of the changes reported, this was the least common, taking place in only 6% of the 1331 schools. Nevertheless the detailed answers from headteachers about their work so far in schools on restructuring represent some of the most interesting transcripts we have. Some schools had clearly taken on staff roles and deployment in thorough, imaginative and equitable ways. We can only give a taste of the kinds of responses here.

*All support staff have had their job descriptions reviewed. (Special)*

*We have had a major restructure of the support staff to take on roles formerly done by teachers. This process is still ongoing. Duties & tasks had historically been evolved in the school with individuals. Part of the restructure looked at grouping tasks that sat well together, rather than 2-3 people being involved in the process and task. (Secondary)*

*Following the workforce reform the school undertook a complete provision mapping audit. This will demand a different structure to support work in the school, more specialists will be required. (Primary)*

### 7.1.2 Nature of reallocation – roles / tasks now done by support staff

There were 1810 responses which indicated the nature of the reallocation of tasks and roles now undertaken by support staff. This constitutes 42% of all responses. It was possible to code these into three broad categories, according to the type of role and / or task referred to: administration, supporting learning / pedagogical, and other school tasks or roles. The reallocation of administrative tasks formed the largest component, being 27% of all responses, compared with only 14% for tasks supporting learning and 2% for other tasks, such as break-time support. This emphasis is not unexpected, as the tasks listed for reallocation during the first phase of teacher contractual reform were essentially administrative in nature and had virtually nothing to do with the direct support of pupils in classes or elsewhere in the school.

#### 7.1.2.1 Administrative roles and tasks

The most common tasks reallocated were displays and photocopying, followed by a general code for easing teacher workload, examinations, money collection, inputting data, supporting teachers, and then dealing with pupil attendance, and timetables. (These data are not easily comparable with those reported in Chapter 6 regarding re-allocated tasks, e.g., because the questions (closed options vs. open) and the respondents (teachers vs. headteachers) are different, and the frequencies address somewhat different things.

The data revealed sharp contrasts across the school types. Inputting data, attendance follow up, timetables, easing teacher workload, records/reports, and exams (codes Ba)v,vi, vii, ix, x and xii) were more frequently recorded by secondary schools (13%,11%,16%,18%,6%,32% of secondary schools vs 2%,<1%,2%,5%,1%,4% of special schools, and 5%,3%,1%,6%,1%,<1% of primary

schools). Neither special nor primary schools have to deal with comparable amounts of this type of work, so it is not surprising that these tasks and roles figure so largely in the remodelling of the support staff workforce in secondary schools.

*Taken over more mundane administrative tasks – invigilating exams, liaising with other schools. (Special)*

*Two new Admin posts created for Sept 2003 to take Admin duties from teachers: 1x30 hrs – Examinations officer/Data Input & Analysis/Finance. 1x31hrs – Attendance/Work Experience/Organising Supply cover/Admin for Pupil Support Team. (Secondary)*

*We have changed responsibilities of one of our classroom assistants to Special Needs Co-ordinator Assistant. She now takes on more of the administrative tasks for our SEN Co-ordinator who is a class teacher. One of our other classroom assistants has taken on new role as Assessment Assistant, inputting data & producing reports. She also runs the new computerised library. (Primary)*

Categories Ba) i – vi were far less frequently recorded by special schools (4,4,1,<1,2,<1 vs 19,20,7,4,5,3 of primary schools and 9,11,11,2,13,11 of secondary schools – all figures are percentages of each type of school). Why they should have reported such low incidences of photocopying, displays, money collection, filing students' work, inputting data and attendance follow-up is less immediately obvious. The collection of money (Ba) iii) and the registration and follow-up of pupils (Ba) vi) are likely to be less time consuming in special schools, since the numbers are generally smaller and the issue of absences can often be resolved when pupils are picked up from home by the escorts. The amount of paper-based work done by some special school pupils may be much less than that of mainstream pupils and this would explain why bulk photocopying (Ba) i), filing (Ba) iv) and display of pupils' work (Ba) ii) were far less frequently reported in such schools (4%, 4% and <1%, compared with 19% / 20% / 4% in primary and 9% / 11% / 2% in secondary schools.) The amount of data to input (Ba)v) is also likely to be relatively less in many special schools, with their smaller numbers and their fewer candidates for SATs and other exams. This may explain why only 2% of special schools list data input as a reallocated task, compared with 5% of primaries and 13% of secondaries. However, visits to special schools in the first stages of Strand 2 suggested that all or many the tasks mentioned above had already been reallocated to support staff, prior to the 12 months referred to in the question.

*Registers, examinations etc now done by office staff. All display work done by Learning Support. Contact with families, administration of pupil needs – care staff. (Special)*

*Technician services provided to all departments for one day per fortnight to help with filing, displays, reprographics, etc. Collection of all money for trips etc done by bursar. (Secondary)*

*...Display work. entering data. administering reading tests. bulk photocopying. light admin duties eg. filing, mounting children's work. (Primary)*

Primary schools reported two items more commonly than special and secondary schools. They were more likely to have reallocated photocopying and displays.

#### 7.1.2.2 Roles and tasks supporting learning / pedagogical

The two most frequently reported ways in which support staff were now being used to support learning were covering / taking whole classes (15% of schools - Bb) ii) and being responsible for

groups (13% of schools - Bb) iii). (Though it is recognised that these are two very different responsibilities, it was not always possible from headteachers' responses to distinguish between covering and taking whole classes, so for the purposes of this analysis they were put together.)

*Support staff are increasingly expected to lead part of some lessons, either with the whole class (-max.8 EBD pupils) or with a small group. (Special)*

*The SSA's provide a flexible 'Task Force' and have been used for a number of duties both within the classroom (eg Art & Food Technology, Library, etc) and in the Admin office (Reception), also providing short term cover in cases of absence. (Secondary)*

*1 x LSA nominated display co-ord. (½ day per week for this activity). 3 x LSAs (are) used to teach large groups / whole class for short sessions – in addition to (specialist staff from outside the school). 2 x LSAs training for HLTA. (Primary)*

Secondary schools reported less use of support staff to take groups (5% compared with 11% and 17% for special and primary schools), while primary schools were the least likely to have allocated cover and taking whole classes (12% compared with 19% and 17% for secondary and special schools).

*All support staff are employed on a higher pay range and all are expected to 'teach' classes, groups, individual pupils. they always have been. all have permanent/full-time contracts. All are involved in all INSET/meetings etc. (Special)*

*We have employed TAs to deliver FLS & KS3 intervention initiatives. (Secondary)*

*Approximately 50% of our TA staff are willing and able to take on more responsibility – group teaching, supervising whole classes or supporting e.g. music teacher in a supervisory role with other colleagues when a number of classes taught together for singing. (Primary)*

Some schools had therefore set people and practices in place which would allow them to relieve teachers of cover. The two forms of support outlined above were the most radical and likely to free up the largest amount of time for teachers. In addition, other responses in this set of categories were evidence of teachers' workload being reduced through reallocation of responsibilities such as pupil behaviour, mentoring and marking books and tests.

*Learning Support Assistants work as part of a team. They are encouraged to get involved in tutorials, behaviour target setting, general learning support and 'circle time'. (Special)*

*...Significant upward pressure for extra SEN and behaviour support teaching assistants; increased need for learning mentors to support students following vocational pathway when they miss timetabled lessons in core subjects and in support on vocational activities. (Secondary)*

*Some have been trained to deliver LFS, ALS and ELS, and they prepare resources, teach, set work and mark it. SNSAs set homework, mark it and plan under supervision of SENCO. All support staff LSA and SNSA regularly contribute to assessments of children. (Primary)*

These accounted for 5% of all responses (Bb) i, iv –x) and were reported in 1 - 6% of all schools.

### 7.1.2.3 Other roles and tasks

These formed a relatively small part of what schools were doing to change the workload of teachers, being only 2% of all responses. They included changes in use of support staff for break-time supervision (B c i), or clubs before, during and after school (B c ii); and outreach and home school liaison roles for support staff.

The remaining coding categories were created to deal with the 'evaluative' content of the responses, as opposed to the descriptive items reported above. Five main issues emerged from the analysis of these responses and these are presented in separate sections below.

### 7.1.3 Views on support staff taking on pedagogical / learning support roles

Some (78) headteachers expressed an opinion about this aspect of change in support staff roles. These varied from the obviously positive through to those where reservations were expressed, and where the comments were clearly negative or hostile. Each response was therefore coded separately in terms of the degree of support each view had amongst respondents. It should be remembered, though, that there were only 78 such responses, representing 6% of the schools in the sample, and we need to interpret findings with caution.

#### 7.1.3.1 Positive

A positive view was given by 37 respondents (3% of schools). Special school heads were far more likely to express positive views about support staff taking on pedagogical/learning support roles, compared with primary and secondary heads (16%, 1% and 1% respectively of each type of school).

*Classroom Assistants ...Most of them are more than capable of teaching classes, following lessons planned by teaching colleagues, in the absence of a class teacher. This has not been practice within the school until this academic year when the Workforce Reforms have given SMT a context in which to do this. (Special)*

*New roles to support Learning: Technicians work as instructors in art and DT in practicals where they have an expertise (e.g. art technician is a ceramics expert. (Secondary)*

*TAs have had [some, not all] contract modified to enable them to take a class. School relies heavily on ICT to support children so all TAs have had 16 sessions x 2½ hours of ICT training and some workboards and digital cameras etc. TAs are expected to teach! Albeit groups but these are getting bigger. (Primary)*

#### 7.1.3.2 Reservations

This view was expressed by only 1% (or 16) of respondents and it took the form of 'yes, but....' type answers, revealing reservations of some kind over the content and / or manner of this aspect of the National Agreement.

*Some admin tasks are now done by LSAs instead of by teachers. We have discussed HLTA post – but are not likely to be creating such a post just yet. We are a special school and it is felt teachers are needed in all lessons. (Special)*

*I do not necessarily agree with TAs covering classes, but in our school, the staff (both TAs and teachers) are keen to give it a go. Without significant additional resources I do not think there is an alternative in meeting this element of workforce reform. (Primary)*

### 7.1.3.3 Negative

The number of negative views was intermediate between the positive and those with reservations, with 2% (25) of heads expressing their disagreement with, or opposition to, this change in support staff deployment.

*We are having problems organising appropriate LSA staff to pupil age/ability. We are not seeing any LSAs applying for HLTA status because they do not want to take whole classes (especially on low pay). We are not happy about the wider tasks & roles expected of LSAs in the Workload Agreement & HLTA status, especially from an Ofsted viewpoint of high expectation in teaching & learning... This is an initiative on the cheap. (Primary)*

*I believe that support staff have experienced a major change in their role. Single status affected pay and conditions. The expectations of TAs' own abilities and competencies has completely changed. Original support staff were a "mum's army" who did general welfare activities in class. Now they are expected to deliver ELS, ALS, FLS, Springboard (all catch up programmes) and lack of academic ability creates problems within school. Their salaries are insufficient and fail to reflect the demands of their very useful support role. They are not teachers yet they are expected to teach. (Primary)*

### 7.1.4 Budgetary / financial issues

More than twice as many responses mentioned items in this category, compared with the previous one (187 compared to 78). It appears that financial issues were more pressing than the pedagogical role of support staff.

#### 7.1.4.1/2 LA delegated funding and central Government funding

The vast majority of references to budgetary problems did not mention the role of the LA (just 11 schools). It was the central Government role in providing finance for the changes which was most often commented on (158 or 12% of schools).

*The overall picture remains insufficient funds to do the job properly. (Special)*

*...There is no funding identified in the LEA's budget for this, despite Government promises to the contrary. Therefore, we are having to use small increases in the budget from other sources to finance these initiatives. This is unacceptable. (Secondary)*

*We don't have enough money to deliver Teacher Workload Agreement and are chronically under-staffed with respect to support staff. Lack of money delegated by the Welsh Assembly is a massive problem. (Primary)*

#### 7.1.4.3 Problem when statemented children leave

Nine (1%) of schools referred to the problem created when pupils with SEN moved out of the school, taking their designated funding with them. This loss of funds can impact heavily on the hours of work, or even the posts available, for support staff.

#### 7.1.4.4 Unpaid goodwill

The small number of heads (9) who referred to this aspect of financial difficulties were acknowledging how important the goodwill of support staff could be in making up for the lack of adequate funds.

#### 7.1.5 Problems of remodelling / resistances to remodeling

These responses were detailed extensions / expansions of the reservations or opposition which headteachers registered in section (D) comments. In spite of being a small proportion of the total number of responses (2%), they provide an insight into some practical issues facing remodelling at the time, from a headteacher's perspective. The comments were sorted into four categories, on the basis of the particular issue referred to.

##### 7.1.5.1 Mismatch of staff to new requirements

The 2% of headteachers who commented on this, drew attention to the fact that not all their support staff were necessarily well matched to the new demands.

*Recruitment of support staff is relatively easy but getting suitably skilled people is hard. In the case of Teaching Assistants (especially Bilingual TA) for example, basic skills in Literacy and Numeracy are lacking. Although TAs are expected to take on some roles formerly expected of teachers, there's such a gap in TAs' knowledge/qualifications/skills that they simply cannot fulfil them effectively. (Primary)*

##### 7.1.5.2 National qualification, pay-scale and structure

A few (11) primary and special school headteachers referred to this issue as a problem for them. Their comments reveal difficulties they had with the management of changes in role, particularly in the absence of the national standards.

*I have always employed ASW staff to do admin tasks – as well as working as work experience coordinator. Unfortunately, the workload agreement has made the ASW staff re-think their wages and as there is no structure have become upset. (Special)*

##### 7.1.5.3 Support staff resistance to role change / reduced salaries

Some support staff (2%) were resistant to changes of role and salary issues.

*Learning Support Assistants have always undertaken the roles which are identified in the Workload Agreement. They are particularly keen to develop their skills and knowledge. However, a change in attitude towards their duties has occurred through the lack of salary to match their responsibilities and, the knowledge that teachers salaries have increased substantially. In our authority, recognition must be given for the match of duties and responsibilities to financial recompense and a suitable salary scale should be implemented for the development of their role. (Primary)*

There was another, totally different aspect to resistance reported by some headteachers. Established support staff may have been content with the roles they had been carrying out and were not seeking change. It was not surprising that some resisted change.

*Teaching Assistants at our school now undertake routine filing, data entry, dinner & registration registers, photocopying, etc. This has meant less time to support special needs children. Some teaching staff have found directing TAs as 'personal assistants' hard. Some TAs have not been pleased at change from support 2 /3 children to photocopying etc. but with lots of diplomatic manoeuvring , it has been accomplished satisfactorily. (Primary)*

#### 7.1.5.4 Problems of time and / or space

A few heads (6) commented on one or other of these aspects connected to recent changes. If teachers are to meet with their in-class support staff, then time when both groups are free to meet had to be provided within the working day. This had cost as well as logistical implications.

*...They also need more time to plan and time liaise with the Teachers or SENCO. This provides extra work for teacher & SENCO in order to get the best from the support staff. Staff feel, sometimes in a busy time, it is easier to do it yourself. (Primary)*

Space was also needed to accommodate any extra staff.

*We are gradually increasing our support team to deal with increasing workload – our issues are .... to find suitable working space for them to operate. Our administration space is well below our actual need. (Secondary).*

#### 7.1.6 INSET / training issues

There were 142 schools (11%) which referred to two aspects of training.

##### 7.1.6.1 Training now provided

These responses (110) formed the bulk of category F and represented 8% of the schools in the sample. Fewer secondary schools (2%) than special (8%) and primary (11%) referred to greater training provision.

*All are included (and paid!) in whole school training days. All have access to LEA training (equity). (Special)*

##### 7.1.6.2 Increased need for training

There were 32 schools (2%) that said there was an increased need for training.

*The increasingly specialist nature of the school admin officer/finance officer role .... The possibility of LSAs in future being required to supervise classes...will change the role and responsibilities of some individuals. These work requirements have significant training implications and arguably require a different type of individual. (Primary)*

#### 7.1.7 Views on the National Agreement in general

Responses in this category comprised the largest portion of the 'evaluative' comments. They have been sorted into the same three sets as those which referred to the deployment of support staff in pedagogical roles.



### 7.1.7.1 Positive

4% of headteachers expressed their positive opinion of the National Agreement and it hardly differed across the three types of school.

*We had already implemented much of the “Remodelling” agenda. Since 2000 teachers have had 1 day per fortnight non-contact. Support staff already do vast majority of the “24 tasks”. it has always worked well, which is why I committed funds to it years ago!!* (Special)

*This school was already well down the road for using support staff for many of the tasks identified in the Workforce Reform. These changes have proved to be much more efficient. We would like to go further with this but lack of funding makes the job more difficult. This school has an inclusive staff who work together as one team.* (Secondary)

### 7.1.7.2 Has reservations

Comments were coded here if they were of the ‘yes.. but’ kind, or where respondents expressed reservations in other ways. A far greater proportion of headteachers who expressed views on the National Agreement fell into this category (10%).

*In a school like this teamwork is essential. Any notion that we should give support staff tasks that are not deemed important for teachers denigrates the professionalism of our support staff. We have managed by negotiation and agreement to ignore those aspects which we find unmanageable as a school.* (Special)

*The significant issue has been to ensure the growth of a shared professional intelligence between support staff and teachers. The aim of this reform is to create a more efficient service in schools. This will only flourish if both aspects of the school share priorities and aims.* (Secondary)

Even if headteachers generally welcome the National Agreement, there may be implications emerging from it which can also present them with problems. Primary heads appeared to be the most reserved in their enthusiasm (12%), compared with only 6% of special and 9% of secondary Heads.

### 7.1.7.3 Negative

The proportion who were negative about the National Agreement was only 1%.

#### *Comments on findings from Chapter 7*

It seems that changes in the deployment of support staff had taken place in the year prior to the survey in virtually all the schools in the sample. Responses showed that there was a difference between schools in the degree to which change had taken place. Perhaps the clearest trends were for differences between the three school types. Secondary schools were more likely to intend to introduce changes, create new posts or appointment of new staff, and initiate a review of all or most posts. But the greatest contrast in the responses of the different school types concerned the reallocation of clerical and routine tasks to support staff. Special schools were far less likely to have done this, and this probably reflects existing organisational factors in special schools and the fact that changes were more likely to have already taken place.

At this stage in the remodelling process, few schools had begun to carry out wholesale reform review of all or most of the support staff roles and their place in the schools’ structures, though the detailed answers from headteachers about their work reflected the amount of work they had undertaken.

There were a number of responses which indicated the nature of the reallocation of tasks and roles now undertaken by support staff. The reallocation of administrative tasks formed the largest component, being 27% of all responses, compared with only 14% for tasks supporting learning and 2% for other tasks, such as break-time support. The most common administrative tasks reallocated during Phase 1 of teacher contractual reform were photocopying and displays. This emphasis is not unexpected, as the tasks listed for reallocation were essentially administrative in nature and had virtually nothing to do with the direct support of pupils in classes or elsewhere in the school. This was why these particular tasks were seen as inappropriate for teachers. To that extent, the intention of the National Agreement to tackle teachers' workload, appears to be having success in the area of administrative tasks.

In terms of supporting learning, over the past year more support staff were teaching groups of pupils and covering whole classes. Secondary school headteachers reported much less use of support staff to take groups, while primary schools were the least likely to allocate cover and take whole classes. These differences probably reflect ways in which existing differences in the working practices and curriculum of the three types of school are affecting the introduction of the National Agreement. Groups are a typical feature of primary class organisation and support staff have commonly been deployed to work with one or more, whilst the teacher works with other pupils. Small numbers of pupils in special school classes, make it likely that the adults will be deployed to support a small group each, at least for part of the time each day. In contrast, the greater use of whole class teaching likely in secondary schools means that groups are less commonly formed and are less available for support staff to work with. A number of other tasks which relate directly to pupil learning and teaching, such as marking books and carrying out pupil assessments, were being taken on by some support staff. A variety of other tasks had been taken over by some support staff, particularly related to pupils' behaviour and their control and supervision when not in lessons. It will be possible to provide a more systematic account of support staff activities from observations and time logs in Strand 2 of the DISS project.

Some headteachers expressed an opinion about the use of support staff in a direct pedagogical role. Positive reactions far outnumbered the negative in special and secondary schools, but in primary schools negative comments outnumbered positive (though neither were common). Perhaps the most notable result here was the fact that special school headteachers were far more likely to express positive views about support staff taking on pedagogical/learning support roles, compared with primary and secondary heads and this probably reflects existing practice in special schools, where support staff have routinely been involved in supporting learning, particularly on a one-to-one basis.

A few headteachers had encountered problems in attempting to introduce changes in support staff deployment: new roles mismatched to present staff, resistance to change amongst present staff, pressures on time and space and the lack of national standards for support staff qualifications and pay-scales. Some headteachers referred to the training needs arising from the National Agreement and more courses were being provided by some of them. Far fewer secondary schools than special and primary referred to the provision of greater training provision or the need for training. This may be because less need for it is perceived or it may not be so necessary in secondary schools.

A few headteachers expressed an opinion about the National Agreement in general. Most of these were classified in the middle of a three point scale, and had some reservations about its conception and / or its implementation so far. At the two ends of the scale there were more positive than negative responses.

A number of studies, including reports from the Class Size and Pupil Adult Ratio (CSPAR) project (e.g., Blatchford et al, 2004), have shown how over time, and in ways that were not systematic or

uniform, there has been a shift from supporting teachers by helping with practical tasks such as preparing materials, setting up classrooms prior to lessons and clearing up when lessons were finished, toward more help for teachers by working directly with pupils. Responses from the current survey revealed that this process of role transformation had produced a range of outcomes in the schools represented in the sample. Some had clearly allowed and encouraged teachers to deploy their in-class support staff to directly help pupils, individually as well as in groups. This survey showed that further expansion of their role in supporting of learning was viewed positively by some headteachers but not all. Some schools had drawn a very clear line to separate the role of the teacher from those of support staff and defended the unique status of the teacher against the use of support staff carrying out teaching tasks. It will be possible in future survey points to monitor the situation over time.

### **Key findings from Chapter 7**

- Headteachers were asked to comment on changes in the deployment of support staff over the previous 12 months (i.e., the year prior to the summer term 2004). There were two main sets of responses evenly divided between references at a general level to how far the National Agreement had produced changes, and to details of tasks and roles which had changed. In the other responses there were views on the role of support staff regarding teaching and learning and on the National Agreement in general, reference to budgetary issues and identification of problems encountered with the National Agreement.
- Schools varied in terms of the degree of changes that had taken place, with no change, or where changes had already happened, at one end, through to a fundamental restructuring or review of support staff, at the other end of the scale. The most common response was a reference to ways that some or all of the 24/25 tasks had been allocated, followed by reference to new staff or posts being created, and new job descriptions, new status in the schools or new contracts.
- At this stage in the remodelling process, few schools have begun to carry out wholesale reform of support staff .
- There were a number of responses which indicated the nature of the reallocation of tasks and roles now undertaken by support staff. The reallocation of administrative tasks formed the largest component, compared with tasks supporting learning and other tasks, such as break-time support.
- In terms of supporting learning, over the past year more support staff were teaching groups of pupils and covering whole classes. Secondary school headteachers reported much less use of support staff to take groups, while primary schools were the least likely to allocate cover and take whole classes.
- Some headteachers expressed an opinion about the use of support staff in a direct pedagogical role. Positive reactions far outnumbered the negative in special and secondary schools, but in primary schools negative comments outnumbered positive (though neither were common).
- A few headteachers had encountered problems in attempting to introduce changes in support staff deployment: new roles mismatched to present staff, resistance to change amongst present staff, pressures on time and space and the lack of national standards for support staff qualifications and pay-scales. Some headteachers referred to the training needs arising from the National Agreement and more courses were being provided by some of them.

- A few headteachers expressed an opinion about the National Agreement in general. Most of these were classified in the middle of a three point scale, and had some reservations about its conception and / or its implementation so far. At the two ends of the scale there were more positive than negative responses.
- Some schools had already begun to implement the next phase of the workforce agreement, in advance of the September 2005 start-up date.

## 8. Discussion and conclusions

The following section discusses findings from the first survey of Strand 1 in relation to other studies.

### 8.1 Classification of support staff

As described in Chapter 1, there has been a steady and substantial growth in the number of support staff working in schools. In order to meet the varying needs of individual schools, a broad range of roles have emerged and evolved. One first basic aim of the DISS project was, therefore, to document and categorise the current situation.

Previous attempts to classify the roles of support staff have tended to restrict themselves to adults working in support of children and learning (e.g. teaching assistants, learning assistants, classroom assistants, etc), and do not include some categories of support staff, such as administrators and site staff. As described in the introduction, previous support staff classifications have varied and their validity has not been addressed. Groupings have often been based on common sense assumptions about what post titles should be put together rather than testing the categorisation between support staff roles in a formal way. It is important to do this because then one can be clearer about any differences found in deployment and impact.

Following careful piloting and analysis of the MQ and SSQ data, it was found that support staff in England and Wales could be best classified in terms of seven groups.

1. TA Equivalent (TA, LSA (SEN pupils), nursery nurse, therapist)
2. Pupil Welfare (Connexions personal advisor, education welfare officer, home-school liaison officer, learning mentor, nurse and welfare assistant)
3. Technical and Specialist Staff (ICT network manager, ICT technician, librarian, science technician and technology technician)
4. Other Pupil Support (bilingual support officer, cover supervisor, escort, exam invigilator, language assistant, midday assistant and midday supervisor)
5. Facilities Staff (cleaner, cook, and other catering staff)
6. Administrative Staff (administrator/clerk, bursar, finance officer, office manager, secretary, attendance officer, data manager, examination officer, and PA to the headteacher)
7. Site Staff (caretaker and premises manager).

This classification went beyond previous approaches in that it was based on multivariate statistical analysis which classified post titles in groups in terms of the degree of commonality in the tasks they performed. In several cases it was found that previous groupings of support staff post titles were not sustainable once the activities actually undertaken were considered. It was found, for example, that cover supervisors were not grouped with TA equivalent staff as thought by some, or with the administration staff, but with other pupil support staff. Similarly, in terms of tasks actually undertaken, the posts of language assistant and bilingual support were also grouped with the pupil supervision staff. In contrast to previous classifications, ICT network managers were best classified as a technician rather than an administrator. And a strong finding was that caretakers and premises managers, the site staff, performed quite separate tasks to cleaners and catering staff, and no results (either those presented in this report, or using variations on the methods, results of which are not presented here) grouped these post titles together.

The significance of the DISS classification, aside from being based on *all* support staff roles, is also that it accounts for the remodelling and restructuring that has taken place among the workforce

immediately following the introduction of the implementation of the National Agreement in September 2003.

## **8.2 Number of support staff in schools**

The MSQ results indicated that, for all types of school combined, 71% of schools had a change in their number of support staff over the last two years. This reflected the broad trend of the rise in support staff since the signing of the National Agreement in January 2003 (see Chapter 1).

In the DISS Strand 1 survey the numbers of support staff in each school were calculated. The results showed that 16% of schools had 10 or less support staff, 30% had 11-20 support staff, 37% had 21-40, 11% had 41-60, and 6% had 61 or more staff. There were far more support staff in secondary schools and they had higher support staff FTE. Support staff numbers and FTE were lower in primary schools, reflecting their smaller size. This finding is supported by statistics from the the DfES, and Smith et al's (2004) survey of TAs at 318 primary and secondary schools in England and Wales. However, in the study we controlled for other variables including numbers of pupils in schools, and found that special schools had the largest numbers of support staff in each category. This no doubt reflects the greater levels of need in these schools, though this will also be reflected in higher levels of funding that will be provided for pupils with special needs. It is interesting, however, that there are higher numbers of all categories of support staff, not just those with a direct role in pupil support. In the case of site staff this might reflect the greater amount of attention required for specialist areas, e.g., pools, and equipment in the school. There will also be more residential special schools, and this is likely to mean more staff of all categories will be required.

Exact comparisons with other studies are difficult, because, as we have seen, groupings of support staff differ and are often restricted to TAs. For the Annual School Census, the DfES uses four categories of support staff, whereas the DISS project uses seven. DfES data suggest TAs account for 55% of all school support staff (in England). Uniquely, the DISS project has a much wider focus and is able to collect data on a broader range of issues surrounding support staff employment. In the DISS study, TA equivalent support staff were the most frequently found in schools, particularly special schools. Other pupil support staff were the next most prevalent category followed by administrative staff. Site staff were the least numerous category of support staff, and schools were less likely to have any pupil welfare and facilities staff, and technicians.

## **8.3 Increased number of support staff**

The MSQ results showed that 46% of schools cited change in the number of children with SEN as the reason for a change in the number of support staff. In the vast majority of cases, this had led to an increase in the number of support staff. While it is recognised that these data include the responses from special schools, it is an interesting finding given the current model of inclusion adopted by many mainstream schools. This model suggests that support staff are allocated to teachers, classrooms or in growing cases, curriculum areas, instead of being assigned to individual children. The practice of full-time dedicated one-to-one support has drawn criticism for encouraging dependence and also has implication for terms under which the supported is employed (Giangreco et al, 1997; Moran and Abbott, 2002).

The second most common reason given by schools for the change in support staff numbers were new school-led initiatives, a response given by 37% of schools. Virtually all of these schools indicated that this had led to an increase in the number of support staff. Again this merits further investigation, as it may generate new knowledge and ideas relating to innovative approaches to tackling workload and meeting the needs of the National Agreement. Furthermore, it will be interesting to see whether initiatives such as Breakfast Clubs and After-School Clubs have had any impact on this increase.

Some examples of school led initiatives were described in headteachers' open ended responses to the MSQ. This is an area that will be pursued in future surveys in Strand 1 and in case studies in Strand 2.

#### **8.4 Who are the support staff?**

The findings from Strand 1 support but extend results from other studies which have mostly just focussed on teaching assistants and equivalent classroom-based learning support roles. We found that 14% of all support staff had more than one role in the school. It was found, in common with other studies (e.g., Smith et al, 2004) that most support staff were female, and we also found more female support staff in primary than special and secondary schools. Again, in a similar finding to Smith et al (2004), most respondents were aged 36 and over, and almost all classified themselves as of white ethnic background. Beeson et al (2003) also report that most support staff roles are carried out by women, as they 'find that the job fits into domestic situations reasonably well' (2003, p4). Male support staff, meanwhile, 'are often IT or laboratory technicians, or bursars', and frequently have a higher level of training and qualifications (Beeson et al, 2004, p5). The DISS study examined the gender make up of all types of support staff and found that only site staff were mostly male, though there were relatively high numbers of male technicians. Differences between support staff categories in terms of qualifications were examined. Site staff, along with other pupil support and especially facilities staff, had the lowest qualifications, while pupil welfare staff and technicians had the highest level of qualifications.

#### **8.5 Nature of support staff contract**

The DISS survey is the largest survey of support staff yet undertaken and its scale and the rapid pace of change make exact comparisons with other studies difficult. The findings are in general agreement with Smith et al (2004) who report that, on average, TAs in secondary schools are contracted to work more hours than those at primary level. Staff in primary schools were also less likely to be contracted to work 52 weeks. But our findings seem not to agree with another finding of Smith et al. While they report that term-time only contracts are more common for TAs in secondary schools than in primary, the DISS study found that support staff in primary and secondary schools were equally likely to be paid all year round.

The DISS data reveals that about a quarter of support staff worked full-time. We have no test for this, from the current survey, but it seems reasonable to assume that there is a relationship between part-time work and the way in which support staff jobs are organised to fit around caring responsibilities. This would be consistent with Smith et al who found that in many cases TAs had caring responsibilities for either a child/children and/or an elderly relative(s), and HMI (2002) who stated that:

*'Most teaching assistants are women, and this kind of post is sought, in particular, by mothers of young children who wish to combine working part-time with raising a family'* (2002, p13).

On the other hand, reasons for working part-time should not be assumed to just reflect life circumstances of employees – they may also be connected, for example, to the school budget. It is possible, therefore, that staff might wish to have longer contracted hours. This will be explored more fully in the case studies in Strand 2 of the DISS project.

#### **8.6 Contracts and working arrangements of support staff**

Previous studies have shown the problems arising from a lack of clarity over support staff roles, and problems arising when so few have job descriptions. Beeson et al stated that, while 'for some support

staff (e.g. nursery nurses, 1:1 special needs staff), the role may be fairly clearly defined', many support staff 'either have no job description, one that is inadequate, or the person concerned has written their own after appointment' (2003, p6). The DISS Strand 1 data, however, appears to refute this. We found that 88% of support staff said that they had a job description (though we are not able to say on the basis of the Strand 1 survey data how adequate these descriptions might be). This is especially true of support staff in special schools (93%) and less common in secondary schools. These findings support what is widely known about support staff in special schools, in particular those working in direct support of pupils. The nature of the job, in such cases, requires focused and specific direction (Lacey, 2001), notionally laid out in a job description.

Nearly half of respondents in the DISS project stated that their work was supervised by a teacher, with a much higher proportion among primary and special school support staff. It seems reasonable to argue that more frequent instances of classroom-based support will affect the higher incidences of supervision at primary level. We found that about half of support staff had been appraised in the last year. HMI (2002) have called for schools to develop appraisal systems. In future surveys in the DISS project it will be possible to see whether the extent of supervision and appraisal arrangements has increased.

Much of the existing evidence concerning support staff working extra hours outside their contract is anecdotal; for example, support staff at the 32 schools who piloted workload reduction schemes as part of the Pathfinder project, referred to working additional hours, but Thomas et al (2004), who evaluated the project, do not examine or quantify this issue. In the evidence that exists, the 'goodwill' of support staff is a strong theme, as seen, for example, in typically 'arriving early every day and often staying after school' (Tilley, 2003, p36), in order to discuss planning with teachers or prepare resources.

The DISS project is unique in providing systematic data on the frequency of additional hours worked by all types of support staff. We found that half of support staff worked more hours than specified in their contract and nearly two thirds of these worked more hours than specified at least once a week. These results are very similar to those from a GMB survey of school administrative staff (GMB, no date). 61% of support staff who worked more hours than specified in their contracts did so at least once a week. It was found that site staff and administrative staff were likely to work most hours beyond those specified in their contracts, while other pupil support staff worked least extra hours. Lee (2002) has argued that payment for this extra time is important but we found that more than half were not paid for this additional time. The staff most likely to be paid for extra time were facilities and site staff. The staff least likely to be paid were pupil welfare staff, technicians and TA equivalent staff. (The GMB survey found that only 34% of administrative staff were paid for overtime). Again, there is only informal evidence to support this, but it is arguable that the high incidences of site staff and administrative staff (73% and 70% respectively) working more hours is a result of the nature of their duties; for example, caretakers may have to oversee building work during school holidays. In the same way, it is possible to see why other pupil support staff – in particular midday supervisors – are less likely to work additional hours, as they are required for only a fixed part of the school day.

## **8.7 Factors influencing the wages, recruitment, vacancies and retention of support staff**

Historically, pay and conditions have been decided by schools within a framework set by the LA. This has led to much variation, as the data from Strand 1 of the DISS project reveals. There is little existing data on pay for all support staff, and the breakdown of wages in terms of each support staff category is helpful. Wages overall were higher in England than Wales and about £1.50 higher on average in secondary schools than primary schools. This no doubt reflects the fact that more senior specialist posts are more likely in these larger schools or where more specialist posts are needed. The highest average salaries were paid to pupil welfare staff, technicians and administrative staff, while



the lowest salaries were paid to facilities and site staff. Higher salaries (over £15 per hour) were paid to pupil welfare staff, technicians, other pupil support staff, and particularly administrative staff. These support staff groups had a wider range of staff, paid at different levels. This suggests that a career structure with possibilities for promotion and higher salaries are more possible in these posts while facilities and site staff are more constrained in salaries they can earn.

The DISS project also examined in a systematic way factors that influence wages. A number of factors were found to be significant. There were some differences between school types. TA equivalent and welfare staff had highest wages in special schools, whilst technicians in secondary schools had higher salaries than those in primary and special schools. We know that there are far more technicians in secondary schools and this last result may reflect the fact that career progression for technicians is more likely in secondary schools, and there is more possibility for senior and better paid roles. School type did not influence the wages of the other categories of support staff.

Several other results probably also reflect the greater likelihood of career progression in some support staff categories and the way that differences in wages are influenced by factors like qualifications, gender and age. We found that staff qualified above GCSE level were paid higher wages than those who were qualified to GCSE level or below. But it was noticeable that this relation between qualifications and wage did not hold for TA equivalent, facilities and site staff. Female staff had lower wages than their male counterparts for the welfare, technicians and administrative staff categories, but there was no difference between males and females for the other categories. This also probably reflects the fact that career progression and higher wages are more possible in these groups and males appear more likely to reach senior positions. Age was significant in influencing the wages of welfare, technicians and administrative staff, with older staff paid more than younger staff. Once again, these support staff groups seem to have more opportunities for career progression and seniority and higher wages is more likely to be achieved with age. Further examination of the data showed for the pupil welfare category and technicians males had the highest paid positions, and this could explain the difference between men and women in these support staff.

HMI state that schools in less advantaged areas 'have greater difficulty in recruiting teaching assistants of sufficient calibre' (2002, p13). The Strand 1 MSQ results show that there was a trend for more vacancies and increased problems of recruitment and turnover for schools with a higher percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals and for schools with a higher percentage of ethnic minority pupils and pupils with EAL. It was argued that these reflect the social context of the schools and the linguistic and educational characteristics of potential support staff, and these will affect the availability of suitable support staff and possibly their willingness to apply for posts. The most frequent response to the open-ended questions on problems of recruitment highlighted the lack of applicants with expertise or skills and experience as the main hindrance to recruitment. These findings lend support to reasons why schools in some areas experience recruitment difficulties. However, it is important not to make any general conclusions regarding area differences: neither the two examples cited by HMI above, nor the MSQ findings, point to a wider trend regarding rural and urban schools. It will be possible to further explore these findings and possible explanations in the case studies conducted in Strand 2 and also in future questionnaire surveys in the DISS project.

Wider data on support staff vacancies are hard to come by - the DfES only publish vacancy statistics for teaching staff - and so the DISS MSQ results are valuable. They revealed that about a quarter of schools had vacancies for support staff post titles. Most recruitment problems were found for other pupil support staff, particularly in secondary schools, followed by TA equivalent staff. There were least vacancies for site staff. It was noticeable that 'other pupil support' staff presented the most challenging problems in terms of vacancies and turnover. This category of support staff includes mid day supervisors and seems to reflect recruitment difficulties attached to this role, connected to hours and pay. Problems were most marked for secondary schools. There is little indication in the current

literature to account for why this might be the case. It is possible that these differences could be due to an increased number of staff in secondary compared to primary schools, and hence there being more chance of vacancies arising. Answers to the MSQ open-ended questions are also relevant: the most frequent response to the question about turnover referred to the tendency of staff to look for promotion, career development and salary progression elsewhere as the chief cause of turnover.

## **8.8 Training and qualifications of support staff**

The DISS Strand 1 data showed that a third of respondents needed specific qualifications in order to be appointed to their post, and that only 44% were required to have previous experience. Beeson et al suggest that the majority of support staff in schools lack initial training, and that this is ‘a major barrier both to the [their] professionalism and their ability to deliver a consistent job’ (2003, p5). They argue, however, that some support staff may have received ‘incidental training in other contexts’ (2003, p5), applicable to their role in school. Research by Kerry (reported in Beeson et al) suggests that access to in-service training for support staff is ‘patchy at best’ (2003, p5). Kerry claims that 28% of support staff had not attended an INSET session during the last year; 62% had attended one or two; and only 14% had attended five days or more (Beeson et al, 2003). However, the size of Kerry’s sample and his data collection method is unclear.

The DISS Strand 1 results are comparable with Kerry’s findings: two-thirds of support staff had attended school-based INSET within the last two years. This is also reflective of Smith et al’s (2004) finding that the majority of TAs they surveyed reported that they are invited to participate in whole-school INSET.

In the existing literature, attendance rates for non-school-based INSET are less clear. HMI claim that the range of training undertaken by primary TAs has ‘increased substantially’ since the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the DfES induction training (2002, p14). However, HMI continue by stating that ‘the take-up of the DfES induction training has been patchy’ (2002, p15). By the summer term 2002, half of the schools contacted regarding the programme had taken part, while one third of schools were still unaware of the training (HMI, 2002). In the DISS study we found that half of the support staff had attended non-school based INSET or other education and training relevant to their post. Only a third had attended education or training leading to a qualification in the previous two years.

HMI suggest that schools often have difficulty releasing staff to attend training sessions. Smith et al (2004) expand on this point, highlighting some of the barriers which prevent TAs from participating. Reasons cited by TAs tended to be school-based issues, such as not being invited to attend, or that the school could not afford to fund their attendance (Smith et al, 2004). Headteachers who took part in the NfER survey pointed instead to practical barriers, such as TAs ‘family commitments’, or that TAs found the times at which courses ran made them ‘inaccessible’ (Smith et al, 2004). In the analysis of DISS open ended answers we found, where training was mentioned as an issue, that a negative view about training outweighed a positive view. The overall impression gained was that at this point in time schools may provide or support training, but support staff felt this did not necessarily lead to increased pay or promotion. It will be important to follow up these perceptions at later points, as remodelling develops in schools. Importantly, HMI and Smith et al both suggest that TAs who had taken part in training – particularly those for intervention programmes such as ALS and Springboard – had proved to be more effective in supporting literacy and numeracy.

## **8.9 The nature of support staff roles: supporting teachers and pupils**

Once again, there is little quantitative data relating to the amount of time support staff spend supporting pupils and teachers currently available. The data that does exist is found largely in

qualitative case studies focusing on a small sample of TAs (e.g. Schlapp et al, 2003). The DISS project will be the first to provide substantial data relating to this issue across a much broader population. In the DISS questionnaire survey we obtained a numerical estimate of the amount of support offered to teachers and separated this from the amount offered to pupils. This could then be examined in terms of differences between support staff categories and school types. These data showed that secondary school support staff were less likely to support pupils, when compared with their counterparts at primary level. One possible explanation for this can be found by examining Kerry's (2005) typology of TA roles. The higher proportion of support staff in secondary schools doing non-TA equivalent roles (e.g. administrators, technicians, site and facilities staff) may perceive see their role as supporting the 'school' (e.g. caretakers) or the 'curriculum' (e.g. science technicians), rather than teachers or pupils. However, these data rely on support staff making relatively general judgments about time supporting teachers and pupils and in Strand 2 of the DISS project more accurate precise estimates will be made from time logs and observations.

The data also showed that most teachers do not have allocated planning or feedback time with support staff they work with in the classroom. This is in line with most other studies (e.g., Butt and Lance, 2005; Howes et al, 2003; Lee, 2002) and all point to this as a factor undermining good practice. This is particularly true in secondary schools. The majority of teachers (77%) had also not had training to help them work with support staff in classrooms (even though 40% said that they were involved in training support staff themselves). It seems that at the time of the survey much still needed to be in terms of preparing teachers for working with support staff.

### **8.10 The views of support staff on their role**

Most research on perceptions of support staff roles relates to TAs and their equivalent. The DISS project is among the first to throw the net wider, seeking the views of all support staff, about whom little is often known; in particular, the growing number of administrative staff and pupil welfare/pastoral support workers.

Responses to the open-ended question from the SSQ (*Is there anything further you would like to tell us about your deployment in the school?*) reflect comments made by support staff in other research studies. Nearly half of all responses dealt with their roles, tasks and responsibilities, and while most of these were just descriptive, expanding on information given in answer to other questions, most other responses in this section were in some way negative about their roles, tasks and responsibilities. The most common concern was how their workload had become increasingly heavy, in some cases going beyond the tasks set out in their job descriptions. Negative comments are echoed in Schlapp et al's study. Interviewing classroom assistants following workload reform in Scotland, one participant felt her job involved "more admin work; i.e. dinner money, form collecting, etc." (2003, p200).

Another theme mentioned by 12% of support staff concerned comments about pay and conditions. The most common view is that pay does not match responsibilities. We have looked elsewhere in this report at figures on the numbers of support staff working beyond their contracted hours in order to complete tasks, without being paid for the time spent. Here we see the negative feelings that some have toward this. Some support staff called for a review of pay scales, and a few have complaints over the disparity between their pay and that of teachers.

It is important to note, however, that the most reliable estimate we have of support staff views – that is, responses to the two closed questions in the SSQ asking for support staff to indicate their level of job satisfaction and how much they felt appreciated by schools - shows that they were generally positive. Responses from support staff showed that there are many support staff who get a great deal of satisfaction from the work they do in schools. O'Brien and Garner (2001) also provide many positive examples. We found a number of differences between support staff categories and school

types. TA equivalent and other pupil support staff were the most satisfied with their posts, and facilities staff and technicians the least satisfied. Other pupils support staff were also most likely to feel appreciated by their schools, and technicians and administrative staff the least likely. The factors affecting support staff professional satisfaction were investigated, and the results found a suggestion that many categories of support staff felt less appreciated in larger schools. In addition, staff qualified above GCSE level were less satisfied than staff with a lower level of qualification. Older support staff felt more appreciated, and staff from minority ethnic groups felt less appreciated by the school.

It was interesting to note that the qualitative and quantitative analyses of support staff attitudes appeared to differ, with the former more negative. Though they appear to arrive at different positions in terms of how positive staff felt, they are not necessarily contradictory. It may be, for example, that someone gives a predominantly positive general judgment about job satisfaction, and being valued by the school, and yet they also they have some particular concerns they wish to voice.

### **8.11 Impact of support staff on teachers and pupils**

From the teacher's perspective, support staff had a positive effect on their level of job satisfaction. Over half of them said that there had been a large or slight increase in satisfaction. As expected, those support staff who worked more closely in the classroom seemed to have the most effect – especially TA equivalent, followed by technicians – and those with responsibilities out of the classroom like facilities and site staff least. There was a similar positive view about the effect that support staff had in reducing levels of stress. Over half of teachers said that support staff had led to a slight or large decrease in stress. Again support staff with a more direct role in the classroom had most effect.

The implementation of the National Agreement is recent, and very few studies exist on effects of support staff on teacher workloads. Thomas et al (2004) provide statistics based on a survey of the teachers who took part in the Pathfinder project. Their study showed less than half of secondary school teachers (45%) said that working with TAs reduced their workload; for teachers in primary schools, however, the figure rose to 75% (Thomas et al, 2004). In the DISS project we found that just under half of teachers said that support staff had led to a reduced workload. Again, the bias towards only examining TAs' impact on workload reduction does not give as representative a finding as the one found in the DISS project, which accounts for all support staff. Administrative staff and technicians had had most effect on loads, with technicians most likely to have brought about a large decrease. As might be expected, given that they work less directly with teachers, facilities, site, and other pupil support staff had less effect on workloads.

Teachers were much clearer about the positive effect of support staff on pupil learning and behaviour. This was seen in various ways, including providing specialist skills, positively affecting pupils' confidence and motivation, and assisting in behaviour and discipline. This is interesting because most available quantifiable evidence points to few effects of support staff on pupil outcomes (see Blatchford et al, 2002, Elliott et al, 2000, Torgerson et al, 2002). It will be possible in Strand 2 of the DISS project to provide a more systematic analysis of the effect of support staff on pupil outcomes, than has been conducted in previous research.

The DISS project findings also revealed that teachers felt that support staff had benefited their teaching. This was reported in a number of ways; the largest number of comments related to how support staff had enabled teachers to concentrate more on their teaching, allowing them more time to teach and work with other pupils, whilst the support staff worked with pupils with SEN. Again, much of the other existing evidence that supports this is anecdotal, though findings from the CSPAR found a clear and positive effect of the presence of TAs on interactions between teachers and pupils, in terms of more focus on teaching and more individual attention (Blatchford, Bassett and Brown, 2005). Through its formal methodology, the DISS project is generating much needed data in relation

to teachers' attitudes towards the effect support staff have on teaching, but also evidence from systematic observations in classrooms. This will provide a measurable means with which to investigate the notion of 'good will' that surrounds the deployment of support staff.

### **8.12 The pedagogical role of support staff**

In terms of supporting learning, the responses from headteachers to the MSQ open-ended questions show that, over the past year, more support staff were teaching groups of pupils and covering whole classes. It is likely that in the context of remodelling we can expect a variety of classroom models to evolve as support staff become more visible in schools. Cremin et al (2003), for example, explore the use of learning zones designed to improve learning by maximising the role TAs play in primary school classrooms. The deployment of support staff in pedagogic roles is a significant issue linked to this. Much of the current writing on 'transformational change' affecting the school workforce, considers the challenge that widening support staff roles may have on the 'norms that sustain traditional ways of working' (Butt and Gunter, 2005, p132; see also Butt and Lance, 2005); in particular, questioning where the support staff role(s) ends and the teaching role begins in relation to pedagogy. However, in the Strand 1 returns, only a few headteachers commented on this issue. Of the responses received, further expansion of support staff roles in support of learning drew mixed views, and varied by school type; the issue was viewed more positively by secondary school headteachers than their counterparts at primary level. This will also be followed up in future surveys.

The data show that some schools had drawn a very clear line to separate the role of the teacher from those of support staff, and defended the unique status of the teacher against the use of support staff carrying out teaching tasks. This is supported by distinctions drawn in the National Agreement concerning roles of teachers and support staff. Yet there were also issues raised in this study, in line with previous studies, concerning the actual pedagogical activities of teachers and support staff in schools, and ways in which, in practice, they 'augment' (Mortimore et al, 1992) each other. This is an example of the wider and controversial issue of 'permeability' between assistant and professional roles, examined by Bach, Kessler and Heron (no date). Data collected in Strand 2 will allow further consideration of this issue based on evidence from observations of actual classroom interaction and practice.

### **8.13 The wider policy context**

The comments from headteachers to the MSQ reveal that for some headteachers remodelling the workforce involved a review of all or most of the support staff roles, and their place in the schools' structures. While this was found in only six per cent of the schools surveyed, it is likely that this percentage will rise considerably when the next wave of questionnaires are returned from schools. This is also likely to be affected by *The Education (Review of Staffing Structure) Regulations 2005* which require school governing bodies to carry out a review of staffing structures and by the end of 2005 have in place a plan to implement changes over the next three years in order to ensure the effective deployment of all school staff, including support staff. (There are similar regulations in Wales.)

The data from Strand 1 suggests that few schools have yet to begin wholesale reform; others had already changed the working patterns of teaching and support staff prior to one or more of the National Agreement's implementation phases. However, the staffing structure review will impose on schools a formal assessment that will not only test the measures that have been put in place to meet the demands of workload reduction, but generate new solutions. Given the added impact of this policy to the on-going implementation of the National Agreement, the picture regarding support staff deployment over the coming years will continually shift. It will be important, therefore, to account for this in future work in the DISS project.

## **8.14 Differences between countries (England and Wales), type of school and support staff category**

A main point to make about the findings from the Strand 1 data, ahead of the data from Strand 2, is that they represent different realities at three different levels. Firstly, the broad differences between England and Wales regarding support staff employment. Secondly, the variations that exist between the approaches taken by primary, secondary and special schools in relation to support staff deployment, and the impact that these different educational settings have on their employment and the nature of their support role. And thirdly, the notion of support that is implied within each of the seven categories of support staff, the differences that distinguish them from not only each other, but in some cases, the role of the teacher, and the impact this has on the individual's professional satisfaction and teacher and pupil outcomes.

It is not intended to summarise these differences in full here (the interested reader may find it helpful to refer to the summary of findings in Appendix 121, in the separate document). In these final sections we draw out a few final points where connections between sections are suggested and discuss implications of the Strand 1 data in terms of how we might build on them through the next strand of the data collection process.

### **8.14.1 England and Wales**

There were a number of differences between England and Wales. Support staff in England were more likely to be paid across the whole year, more likely to have a job description, and more likely to have had an appraisal within the last twelve months. They were also more likely to require previous experience in order to do their post than their Welsh counterparts. Support staff in England were more likely to benefit from INSET and training than support staff in Wales. Though it is not possible to establish causal direction it is also worth noting that teachers in Wales were less likely to have been trained to work with support staff, and teachers in Wales were more likely than those in England to say that support staff had resulted in no effect on their job satisfaction, levels of stress and workload.

It is difficult to draw any sound conclusions as to why there should be such differences between England and Wales; there is no evidence in the available literature to assist. However, it appears that variation at this broad level centres largely on contractual and career development issues. There is little at school level to suggest any major differences in practice exist between the two countries. Further data from the case studies at a more detailed level, however, may offer more insight into any differences between, say, classroom practice, in England and Wales.

### **8.14.2 Type of school**

There were a number of ways in which the three types of school – special, primary and secondary – differed in relation to areas examined in this report. One basic difference was the higher number of support staff in special schools. This was after controlling for school size and applied to all categories of support staff. This no doubt reflects the greater levels of need in these schools, though it will also reflect higher levels of funding provided for pupils with special needs. We noted that there were higher numbers of all categories of support staff, not just those with a direct role in pupil support. There are likely to be a number of explanations for this, including the fact that there are more residential special schools, and this is likely to mean more staff of all categories will be required.

By and large, the data from Strand 1 paints a more positive picture of support staff and their work in special schools compared with those in mainstream schools. Staff development opportunities seem more widely available, evaluative structures and liaison processes are in place, support is more pupil-

centric and support staff express more satisfaction with their work. In some cases, the reasons for this are fairly clear: the needs of the pupils demand specific support, often on a one-to-one basis; specialist training is often necessary, for example, in restraint techniques. It is arguable, therefore, that what special schools are able to generate and sustain more effectively than many mainstream schools is an ethos of inclusion which extends beyond the classroom and into the staffroom. In other words, their size, their fundamentally caring environment and the difference in demand on teachers' time, might enable special schools to focus more fully on the development needs of individual support staff. By carrying out field work for Strand 2 in a range of mainstream and special schools, it will be possible to explore further whether the type of school affects the culture of support for support staff.

However, it may be too simplistic to suggest that school culture alone has meant that achieving workload reduction has been less difficult for headteachers of special schools than their counterparts at secondary phase. In order to more accurately measure the success with which teachers' workload has been reduced requires a look at other, perhaps more practical, differences between schools, as well as a closer look at the point from which each school type started this reform.

### **8.14.3 Support staff categories**

Once again, differences between support staff categories are summarised in Appendix 121. Here we make a few final comments about professional satisfaction and deployment of support staff. TA equivalent staff spent more time supporting both teachers and pupils, and together with other pupil staff, were more likely to derive satisfaction from their role. In addition, other pupil support staff were also the most likely to feel valued by the school. However, technicians and administrative staff spent notably more time supporting teachers than pupils, and were also the least likely to experience job satisfaction or to feel valued. This is supported to some degree by a recurring comment from technicians that they feel they are not paid in line with their responsibilities. However, this only represents a very small percentage of this support staff group.

The Strand 1 findings hint at two factors that might be usefully considered when exploring professional satisfaction among support staff. Firstly, we do not know whether the balance of support (the time support staff spend supporting teachers vs. pupils) is the result of clear and unambiguous job descriptions or more haphazard circumstances that have built up over time. Role clarity, therefore, may impact upon job satisfaction. Secondly, as this section has already considered, the nature of support and the function of schools may also have a part to play. For example, the findings broadly suggest that support staff working in direct support of pupils are more likely to derive satisfaction from their job than those who support teachers.

But there are also likely to be other factors that cause support staff in particular roles to feel dissatisfied and undervalued. For instance, the most frequent response to the open-ended questions from administrative staff related to excessive workload, although this cannot be said to be wholly representative of this support staff category. The school-based data collection in Strand 2 will allow these reasons to surface, and trends to emerge.

The DISS project also looks at job satisfaction amongst teachers. The National Agreement aims to improve the work-life balance for all school staff; for teachers this is typified by the removal of many of their clerical/administrative duties, new limits on the amount of cover they can provide and the introduction of dedicated PPA time. The Strand 1 findings show that TA equivalent and technicians are the two support staff groups teachers claim have had the most impact on giving them job satisfaction and reducing stress. Technicians and administrative staff have had the most impact in reducing teachers' workload. Facilities and site staff had the least impact in these three areas. A link could be made between the impact technicians and administrative staff have had on reducing

teachers' stress and their own lower level of job satisfaction, highlighting once more the possible relationship between the nature of support and the sense of satisfaction and value experienced by support staff.

The Strand 1 findings reveal that TA equivalent, technicians and administrative staff were the most likely to be involved in lesson planning and preparation. A clearer definition of what constitutes planning and preparation is required, as it is possible that these concepts imply different tasks, with different meanings attached to them, for each of these three support staff groups. For example, for administrative staff, preparation could imply bulk photocopying, and for technicians it could mean setting up apparatus; both of which could be considered whole-class activities. For TA equivalent staff, however, preparation could require drawing on knowledge of individual children in order to prepare differentiated learning resources. This is a fairly broad generalisation, and should not be taken to be the norm. However, it does help to demonstrate the way in which teachers utilise the individual skills sets of different groups, and the outcomes and effect this has as perceived by the various participants.

It should be noted that, for a few teachers, TA equivalent and pupil welfare staff have increased their workload. Additionally, other pupil support staff had had a mixed effect. The case study approach will allow us to investigate the intricacies of the issue of workload, the ways in which different support staff groups are deployed to alleviate teachers of specific duties, the level of involvement they have, and the impact this has in terms of personal satisfaction.

### **8.15 The future of the DISS project**

The first strand of the DISS project has provided data that will provide a solid baseline, against which further waves and modes of research will be conducted. It will also act as a backdrop against which the case studies and systematic observations will be carried out; providing a generic yet reliable picture of the employment and deployment of support staff in English and Welsh schools, the roles they play and the attitudes and perceptions they have of their work. Furthermore, we have first, rudimentary data on the impact of support staff on teachers and their workload.

The case studies and systematic observations will provide much needed information on the reality of this impact, and on the effect of support staff on pupils, and their role in teaching and learning. It is these data that will enrich our view of support staff; a growing group of people who, as they become more visible in schools and classrooms, are under increasing scrutiny.

It needs to be remembered that the survey was conducted at a relatively early stage in the process of remodelling, and that significant changes are likely to have taken place in schools since the summer term 2004. The picture over the next three years will also change significantly. The need to meet new and existing policy aims, new directives that necessitate innovative solutions, the creation or dissolution of roles, external factors effecting employment, will all vie for attention and are likely to conspire to form a continually moving picture of modern schools and the staff that make them up. The DISS project aims to take regular snapshots of this situation and provide up-to-date, and in some cases, brand new data on support staff and the impact they have in schools and classrooms, and on teachers and pupils.



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