



Guidance

## Management & Finance

Head teachers,  
Senior managers

# Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy

Companion volume to  
Bureaucracy Cutting Toolkit  
Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2

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department for

**education and skills**

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## Introduction

Cutting unnecessary burdens on teachers is an essential part of ensuring we have a valued and motivated teaching profession. It also allows teachers to concentrate on their key goal – raising standards. We are therefore delighted to present to you these examples of good practice which form the first companion volume to the Bureaucracy Cutting Toolkit. Together with the examples in the Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2 volume, these form a practical guide with a wealth of examples that will help all schools and teachers.

The Toolkit and two volumes of good practice have grown out of a project in 20 schools in Derby City, Kent, Surrey and Birmingham LEAs, working with the Department and PricewaterhouseCoopers. Together they represent a simple but effective approach. That is what makes them so useful – often simple solutions can be implemented without huge resources, and often it is the simple solutions that save the most time.

The examples in this volume were originally produced by the schools involved at the end of 1999. However, many of the solutions are still very relevant to the reforms of the school workforce detailed in the National Agreement of January 2003 – such as the transfer of administrative and clerical tasks from teachers to support staff; and guaranteed teacher time for planning, preparation and assessment.

All the schools involved in the project have continued to develop better and more efficient ways of working beyond their original examples. The examples have therefore been updated with ‘further developments’ – comprising either information from the individual school or from the Department and central agencies, or a combination of both.

Please let other schools know what you are doing. Word of mouth is very important in ensuring that documents like these are used effectively.

There are inevitably areas not covered by these examples, so we have set up the ‘Cutting Burdens’ website on TeacherNet ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens)) where you can join a discussion area to share good practice and feedback your ideas. As well as the Toolkit and two volumes of good practice, the website also contains information on school workforce reform – including the Time for Standards consultation, the National Agreement and remodelling advice and guidance.

A National Remodelling Team (NRT) has been established to ensure the development of a national network of support to help schools implement workforce reform. The team is led by Dame Patricia Collarbone, Director of Leadership Development Programmes at the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) and provides advice, guidance, case studies and training materials for schools. The NRT works closely with LEAs to ensure schools successfully remodel. For more information, please see the NRT website – [www.remodelling.org](http://www.remodelling.org).

Also, as part of the Department’s National Agreement commitments, we have set up the Implementation Review Unit (IRU), featuring a regionally based Practitioners’ Panel made up of 9 head teachers, 2 senior teachers and 1 bursar. The IRU will consider the impact of new and current policies on the ‘front line’ staff who implement them. The Panel will have direct access to Ministers and will make sure that grass-root concerns get through to the Department and central agencies and are tackled. For further information please see the IRU website – [www.dfes.gov.uk/iru](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/iru).

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**Good Practice Examples**

**Derby City Pilot Schools**

# Gayton Junior School

## Assessing pupils and recording results

Gayton Junior School is a community junior school with 351 pupils aged 7–11.

### Problem

Since the introduction of the national curriculum this junior school has been keeping extensive pupil records in paper form showing each pupil's progress. It wished to reduce the burden of record-keeping by altering the way in which records are kept.

### Solution

In the past, all subjects were recorded by the teacher in the same comprehensive manner, showing each pupil's progress against all the individual targets in all subject areas. In order to reduce the burden the school has now moved to a new approach which records the Core subjects at a different and higher level of detail from the Foundation subjects.

In the case of the Core subjects, each teacher is asked to keep a record for each child against each of the teaching objectives linked directly to the individual attainment targets. The teacher indicates on the record each week/fortnight (as the objectives are taught and tested) whether that pupil performs at the level of the target, or significantly above or below. Individual scores are not noted on the record but the teacher marks against each pupil in the shape of a triangle. One side of the triangle means performing 'significantly below', two sides means 'performing at the level of the target', all three sides of the triangle means performing 'significantly above' target.

However, in the case of the Foundation subjects a class record is kept on a single sheet of A4 for each subject. The teacher completes this sheet to show only the following:

- The teaching objectives covered during the period
- A list of pupils performing significantly above the required performance level
- A list of pupils performing significantly below the required performance level.

The school recognises that, by choice, it is going beyond the advice issued to schools by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) on the need for and the scope of record-keeping. However, it wishes to keep this more detailed record of progress, particularly given that a rapid improvement in these core areas is part of the school development plan.

These detailed assessments enable staff to adjust their plans in both the short and medium-term to reflect the needs of individual pupils. They also enable staff to identify areas in which changes in teaching practice are necessary.

Moving to the more streamlined paper record has significantly reduced the amount of time being spent by teachers on record-keeping. The school is now in a position to convert these simplified paper records into an electronic format. It believes that it can use a simple spreadsheet to record each teacher's marks and that this will reduce still further the time

needed. In addition, analysis of the records will be convenient, appearing in graphs class-by-class and year-by-year. The school believes this will also ease the burden of subsequent reporting to parents, as it will be able to summarise pupil achievements more easily using the spreadsheet and have readier access to them as the teachers prepare reports. In addition, the records can be summarised and passed to secondary schools as part of the transfer file. There were no significant additional financial costs resulting from this change.

## **Benefits**

Less teacher time is used because less detail is required in the paper records. The records will also be more accessible to management and successive teachers and schools.

The measured savings in this school as a result of the project were:

- A more focused weekly plan taking curriculum leaders one hour per week to produce (formerly two hours)
- Individual teachers recording their delivery (formerly taking two hours a week) now done through annotation of the medium-term plan, taking 15 minutes a week
- Transfer of information on a pupil's progress on to tracking documentation, formerly carried out by teachers and taking one hour per subject, now done by office administrative staff for core subjects only
- Collection/collation of teachers' records, formerly taking individual teachers four hours, expected to be reduced to about 30 minutes as records will cover whole class rather than 30–35 individuals
- Interpretation of information by individual teachers, prior to construction of plans, reduced from two hours to 15 minutes
- Annual examination of records by curriculum managers now takes a 30-minute meeting as compared with the previous three-hour meeting.

When the records are transferred into electronic format, the benefits of time saved, accessibility and transferability will be further enhanced.

## **Wider application**

The school began the project uncertain whether the use of computers would be possible in the short-term. This was because of a simple lack of access to the hardware as well as a sensible reluctance to jump into an electronic method of working before they were sure of the recording system they wanted to use. During the course of the project they have cut the load on teachers and now feel ready to move on to an electronic system of recording with confidence that they can make greater reductions.

Many schools will be in the position of this school at the start of the project. The process they have gone through, as well as the actual changes they have made, will enable many schools to manage efficiently the step change towards use of computers.

## Further developments

Further advice and guidance on achieving the 'step change' necessary to fully utilise and integrate ICT systems in schools can be found in the 'Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2' document. These examples demonstrate how individual schools can implement good practice in setting up streamlined management and administrative systems across the full range of their activities. It focuses in particular on the introduction of ICT, electronic data handling and the transfer of tasks from teachers to support staff. Redesigned systems promoted the more efficient processing of tasks and allowed support staff to take on a range of tasks previously undertaken by teachers.

The examples highlight improvements that have a direct link to improved teaching and learning including:

- Better pupil data, combined with better quality planning, allowing greater focus on individual pupil progress and higher quality teaching
- Greater clarity over assessment due to establishment of common approaches between departments
- Improved pupil behaviour management due to a combination of better monitoring (due to better and more timely data) and greater consistency of application of sanctions.

'Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2' is available on the Department's Cutting Burdens website ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens)).

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*For further details from the school contact: Ms Sally Ann Sweetman Tel: 01332 760372*



## Gayton Junior School

### Reporting to parents on pupil performance: review of content, format, reporting method and use of ICT

Gayton Junior School is a community junior school with 351 pupils aged 7–11.

#### Problem

This junior school has in the past issued hand-written annual reports to parents on their child's progress. This has entailed each teacher writing separately on each pupil's report a standard statement of what areas of the national curriculum have been covered.

The school already used a commercially-produced carbonised paper report with the school name pre-printed on the top and standard formats with empty spaces for the teacher to write comments on the pupil.

#### Solution

The school considered ICT-generated reports but the governors rejected the idea as they feared such reports would be built up from statement banks and therefore lack the individual touch important to parents. In addition, the school itself was reluctant to move swiftly to a computer-based system, partly through lack of access to enough hardware.

Instead, the school has included standard paragraphs printed as part of the initial format on the blank report forms. The standard paragraphs state the areas of the national curriculum covered by the class during the year so that only the teacher's individual comments need to be added. These paragraphs summarise more detailed descriptions of the areas of the curriculum to be covered which are given to parents at the outset of each half-term.

As an additional development, the deputy head used a laptop to complete the pre-printed report forms to show that the system can move smoothly to a fully ICT-based solution in the future.

There were no additional financial costs to the school arising from this solution.

#### Benefits

The school has shown that the new practice cuts down the time spent by each teacher on filling in the report by some 40 per cent. The previous reports took each teacher about one hour per pupil to complete. The new forms reduce this time to about 35 minutes per child.

In addition, as a result of the experience this year and in particular the pilot carried out by the deputy head, the school considers that this initial paper-based move has prepared it for the eventual translation to an ICT-based solution. This solution will enable individual comments on each child to be generated by individual teachers. The school sees this as being introduced once all teachers have access (preferably at home as well as at school) to a PC.

The school does not wish to move to a reporting system which uses statement banks but expects that use of the normal word-processing package will not deter teachers from using their own words when generating the reports electronically.

### **Wider application**

This is a good example of a school adapting its reporting method to an improved paper-based system as a precursor to introducing an ICT solution to report writing.

### **Further developments**

The 'Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2' examples demonstrate how individual schools can implement good practice in setting up streamlined management and administrative systems across the full range of their activities. It focuses in particular on the introduction of ICT, electronic data handling and the transfer of tasks from teachers to support staff. Redesigned systems promoted the more efficient processing of tasks and allowed support staff to take on a range of tasks previously undertaken by teachers. There are also direct benefits in terms of clearer pupil reports to parents and better parental access to data on pupil progress.

'Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2' can be found on the Department's Cutting Burdens website ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens)).

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*For further details from the school contact: Ms Sally Ann Sweetman Tel: 01332 760372*

## Gayton Junior School

### Managing finances: free school meals information

Gayton Junior School is a community junior school with 351 pupils aged 7–11.

#### Problem

This school's Local Education Authority (LEA) has a procedure requiring all applications for free school meals to be processed centrally in the education department. To make an application and to prove eligibility, parents have to take their Income Support book (or equivalent evidence) to the central office.

The school is often faced with parents whose free school meals entitlement is about to run out, who have been reminded by the LEA central office but have still not found the opportunity to prove their continuing entitlement.

As a result the school clerical assistant spends time ringing or otherwise contacting parents to encourage them to make the journey into the city centre. If the parents miss the deadline, then the following can occur:

- The pupil is deprived of a school meal he or she is entitled to
- The school has the problem of explaining to the parent that money now has to be sent in for a meal
- The school has to handle situations where a pupil is hungry, is expecting a free meal but cannot be given one
- If the 'gap' occurs in January, the school can lose income as its free school meal numbers are a factor in the LEA's fair funding formula.

In addition, the school may have a greater percentage of pupils who are really eligible for a free school meal than its comparator schools. This is because other pupils have failed to confirm their eligibility in the required way. If this is the case, then the set of comparator schools used by Ofsted to judge the overall effectiveness of the school may be incorrect. Thus the school may, in effect, be compared with schools with a lower real percentage of free school meal recipients than would be the case if all the eligible pupils were identified.

#### Solution

The actual decision to authorise entitlement to a free school meal is still made by the central education department. But instead of every parent having to travel into the city centre to show their Income Support book (or equivalent), they can take the evidence to the school. The school then photocopies the relevant section of the book, signs that it is a true copy of the original and sends it to the central office.

There was no significant additional financial cost to the school arising from this solution.

## Benefits

The school has run a pilot comparing the workload falling upon the school secretarial staff of handling free school meals applications at the school in this way. This replaces the procedure of spending time chasing up parents who have not registered their eligibility at the central office.

Under this new procedure the school has saved time in contacting parents and sorting out the problems caused by pupils losing their technical eligibility.

The measurement shows that the school spends less time in photocopying the Income Support book and faxing/sending it to the central office than it now spends on chasing parents to go to the central office.

There are additional benefits:

- The parents find it easier to prove free school meals eligibility
- The pupil receives free school meals without delay
- The school ensures that its own income from free school meals under fair funding is maximised
- The school ensures that it is compared by Ofsted with schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals.

## Wider application

There are no central requirements from the Department for Education and Skills to adopt a particular procedure for handling applications for free school meals and LEAs are free to develop their own procedures to best meet local circumstances. Thus only some schools will face the problem identified by this school.

However, schools experiencing a similar centralised administrative system for handling free school meals applications will be able to spend less administrative time in chasing them up if they adopt this simple procedure in discussion with their LEA. In addition, the maximising of legitimate claims by those parents eligible is desirable on social grounds.

## Further developments

Full guidance on the changes to free school meal entitlement can be found on the Department's TeacherNet website ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/freemealsandtrips](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/freemealsandtrips)). Further information and articles can also be found on the 'Parents & Schools' magazine website ([www.dfes.gov.uk/parentsmag](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/parentsmag)).

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*For further details from the school contact: Ms Sally Ann Sweetman Tel: 01332 760372*

## Hardwick Infant School

### Special Educational Needs: review of Individual Education Plans

Hardwick Infant School is a community infant school with 142 pupils aged 5–7.

#### Problem

The school keeps an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each pupil but in a format which includes English as an Additional Language. At present the school has a variety of forms in place to record information (Initial Concerns Form, LEA Stage 1 Form, LEA Special Needs Form, School Referral Form, etc.), most of which is hand-written. It is therefore time-consuming to compile and update as well as not being easily accessible to other members of staff. The forms are mainly completed by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and the class teacher.

At present the school has the Schools Information and Management System (SIMS) Data programme and a system provided by its Local Education Authority (known as DART – Derby Assessment & Recording Toolkit). Both are on the office network which are accessible only to office staff and not transferable to any other PC.

#### Solution

The school has reviewed the content and format of the IEP forms and has introduced templates and standard letters. The school has also transferred some of the administrative duties associated with the IEP process to administrative staff. As part of this solution, the school purchased an additional PC and carried out some rewiring at a cost of just over £3,000. In addition, the school's three PC laptops have been networked to the office system, at a cost of £600.

#### Benefit

Rationalisation of the various IEP forms has streamlined the process, making the collection and recording of information easier, and facilitating access to information by other teaching staff. Data input by administrative non-teaching staff has also released valuable teaching staff time. There has been an early saving in time of about 25 per cent, reducing the time spent on action for each child from one hour to 45 minutes. When the systems are networked, the saving is expected to rise to 50 per cent.

#### Wider application

All schools can reduce teacher bureaucracy by using templates and standard letters and by transferring all pupil records to electronic formats.

## **Further developments**

The Department included model IEPs in the revised version of the SEN Code of Practice implemented in January 2002. This can be found on the SEN website ([www.dfes.gov.uk/sen](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sen)) which has quick links to other relevant publications and programmes and a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section covering the code of practice and funding.

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*For further details from the school contact: Mrs S. Sehmbi Tel: 01332 760521 Fax: 01332 343843*

## Meadow Farm Community Primary School

### Preparation and updating of school plans and policies: planning and the delivery of curriculum and Schemes of Work

Meadow Farm School is a community primary school with 282 pupils aged 5–11.

#### Problem

The school devotes a significant amount of time to planning the delivery of the national curriculum. The planning process covers daily lesson planning, weekly planning and medium-term planning.

The process involves the head teacher, all class teachers, curriculum coordinators and classroom support staff and requires a significant investment in teacher time:

- Medium-term planning: mostly at home (a combination of extracting, reorganising and rewriting information in Schemes of Work, pulling together ideas for subjects based on the national curriculum, producing a topic map, and completing a half-termly planning sheet)
- Weekly planning: mostly at weekends to prepare an in-depth daily breakdown for literacy and numeracy
- Daily lesson planning: before and after school, including writing out and copying worksheets, getting materials, setting up the classroom and clearing up.

The school has identified a number of issues in this area which can create an administrative burden and/or which can be improved:

- The amount of policy materials, documents, information and feedback which need to be accessed to inform curriculum planning, for example:
  - National curriculum
  - Desirable Outcome Document
  - Schemes of Work Documents (Science, ICT, Literacy, Numeracy Strategy)
  - SEN Code of Practice
  - School Policies
  - Baseline for each child in each year group
  - Governors
- The level of duplication between the different planning levels
- The impact of national initiatives, for example, the amount of time required to plan and deliver the Literacy Strategy and the consequential changes required to the school's teaching style and organisation
- How assessment is used to inform planning, the feedback loop, and ongoing assessment
- The amount of time spent in preparing and updating Schemes of Work. Most Schemes of Work are currently paper-based and updating year-on-year is very time-consuming
- How to cater for pupils with special educational needs
- The need to have an overview of the curriculum across the school.

## **Solution**

Focusing on Literacy, the school addressed the issues associated with planning the delivery of the curriculum and Schemes of Work by:

- Making use of the guidance available from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and practice recommended by Local Education Authority advisers
- Identifying good practice exemplars and Schemes of Work used by other schools to inform its own planning
- Investigating the use of commercial Schemes of Work, and developing electronic versions of all Schemes of Work in order to aid preparation and updating
- Linking all schemes to assessment at all levels of the planning process
- Reviewing its own ways of working and organisation in an attempt to streamline the process, ensure synergy between medium-term and weekly planning, avoid duplication, and define the appropriateness of cooperative and independent working at different stages in the process. It is intended that the school will develop a planning process which will define the personnel to be involved, the amount of time required and the level of detail required.

The school purchased a laptop PC at a cost of just under £1,300 to develop the electronic versions of Schemes of Work and other documents.

More generally, the school is keen to see more source material being made available electronically or accessible via the Internet. In this way the school will have direct access to materials which can be interrogated and manipulated according to the need to create tailor-made, school-specific curriculum plans.

## **Benefits**

The school was able to streamline the curriculum planning process significantly across the school ensuring synergy between the different levels of planning.

Although there was no significant net gain in teacher time in year 1, the use of ICT and electronic versions of curriculum documents and Schemes of Work now produced will greatly assist in streamlining the process in future years. It is estimated that 20–30 per cent less time will be needed by teachers. This should produce a direct and positive impact on the delivery of the curriculum.

## **Wider application**

As part of its strategy for supporting the implementation of the revised national curriculum, the QCA offers (non-mandatory) Schemes of Work to schools. These model Schemes of Work can be found on the Department's Standards website ([www.standards.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk)).



## **Further developments**

Over 2,000 useful lesson plans and resources have now joined the Schemes of Work on TeacherNet in a further effort to reduce paperwork and make the necessary lesson preparation as straightforward as possible ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials/Resources](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials/Resources)).

At Meadow Farm School, a part-time teacher has been employed to release other teachers to carry out curriculum responsibilities, which would otherwise be undertaken after the school day. Teaching assistants are now used in a wide capacity to assist teachers, not only with the children in class on a day-to-day basis, but also with a wide range of administrative activities. Further information on the developing role of Teaching Assistants, including case studies, can be found on the TeacherNet website ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingassistants](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingassistants)).

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*For further details from the school contact: Mrs J C Morgan Tel: 01332 662631*

## Ridgeway Infant School

### Assessing pupils and recording results

Ridgeway Infant school is a community infant school with 258 pupils aged 5–7.

#### Problem

This infant school looks to assessment as a way of gathering reliable and systematic information about a pupil's progress, in order to give teachers an insight into how a pupil learns, what learning difficulties are experienced and to plan subsequent teaching input.

The school was using a system of recording information on Optical Mark Reader (OMR) sheets which was providing very useful data but was taking a great deal of teacher time to produce. The information requirements of the school's Local Education Authority (LEA) also added a further complication.

#### Solution

The school addressed these issues by:

- Purchasing a software package to complete Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) information
- Getting the school clerk to process much of the information
- Requesting an overall analysis and report of baseline and Key Stage 1 SATs data from the LEA.

The school also decided to hold meetings with parents to discuss baseline information, and subsequent progress, during the school day.

The school appointed an additional 10 hours per week of school clerk time to support this solution and to carry out other tasks within the school associated with admissions, at a cost of £6.50 an hour. The school clerk received training from the LEA.

Each class teacher checks the results loaded by the school clerk to ensure accuracy.

#### Benefits

The new software made the exercise much quicker than the original OMR sheets. In particular, class teachers were able to check composite sheets rather than individual OMR forms.

The school clerk's input has released teacher time to work on school level analysis and planning (e.g. standardised scores).

A more positive home-school relationship was felt to have resulted from the improved information available on pupils and from holding progress meetings with parents during the school day.

Measured savings were as follows:

- An annual saving of 17.5 hours of class teacher time
- A further saving at the SATs stage of 6 hours time for the deputy head in entering information on to OMR sheets, and a 30-minute saving for each class teacher in no longer having to check core details.

### **Wider application**

This is a good example of the use of ICT that any school which has not moved to this position might adopt.

### **Further developments**

The Common Basic Data Set (CBDS) provides a standard for data used in school, education authority, Departmental and other software systems. Because all software suppliers use the same definitions, data can be transferred between different systems.

All schools will need to ensure that core pupil data is held in a format consistent with the CBDS definitions ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/tools/ims/cbds](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/tools/ims/cbds)).

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*For further details from the school contact: Mrs P Rolt Tel: 01332 760770*

## Ridgeway Infant School

### Admissions: definition and collection of core registration information

Ridgeway Infant school is a community infant school with 258 pupils aged 5–7.

#### Problem

The school has two entry points for admitting pupils – September and January each year. The admissions process involves the head teacher, three reception class teachers, three nursery class teachers and a clerk. Some 32 hours of teacher time was spent collecting and recording admissions and registration information, in addition to the time spent by the school's clerk. It was apparent that much of the data is duplicated at different stages in the process, for example, information recorded on registration forms, pupil record cards and the child record folder/attendance record of the Local Education Authority (LEA).

The school recognised that it was performing an important function in collecting and recording pupil information that is subsequently used by other schools and the LEA. However, the school was frustrated that a significant amount of teacher time was dedicated to a task where the information requirements are not always well defined and manual manipulation and recording necessary.

#### Solution

The school addressed the issues associated with the admissions exercise by:

- Appointing a clerk for 10 hours per week to undertake duties previously undertaken by the head teacher, three reception class teachers and three nursery class teachers in the area of admissions – also in the area of assessing pupils and recording results, particularly in terms of Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) administration
- Working with the LEA to develop a standardised registration form which incorporates all the core information requirements and specifies the documentary evidence required
- Reviewing the school's mechanisms for collecting and recording the core information (to avoid dual recording and to rationalise the format of the LEA child record folder/attendance record).

In addition, the school considered with its governors and the LEA whether it would be feasible to move to a system of one point entry so that the admissions process would take place only once each year.

The cost of appointing a clerk for 10 hours per week (term-time only) is approximately £2,470 per year.

## **Benefits**

The school has gained 25 hours of extra teacher time. The school will use the released time for more directly pupil-related duties.

## **Wider application**

Clarification of core data requirements and rationalisation of admissions registration forms as required by different agencies (LEA, receiving junior schools, etc.) should be of direct benefit to schools in this LEA in particular and to other schools more generally.

## **Further developments**

The Common Basic Data Set (CBDS) provides a standard for data used in school, education authority, Departmental and other software systems. Because all software suppliers use the same definitions, data can be transferred between different systems.

All schools will need to ensure that core pupil data is held in a format consistent with the CBDS definitions ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/tools/ims/cbds](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/tools/ims/cbds)).

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*For further details from the school contact: Mrs P Rolt Tel: 01332 760770*

## Ridgeway Infant School

### Working with governors: reducing the administrative burden on the head teacher

Ridgeway Infant school is a community infant school with 258 pupils aged 5–7.

#### Problem

The work associated with governors' meetings and working with governors falls directly upon the head teacher. The school has identified a number of issues in its work with governors which can create a significant administrative burden:

- The administrative workload for the head teacher
- The expectation that the head teacher is the school's resident 'expert' on all matters and able to brief and advise Governors accordingly
- The operation of governors' meetings
- The value of the meeting held to present the governors' report to parents.

#### Solution

The school has addressed these issues in the following two ways:

- By working with the Local Education Authority (LEA) to review the support and guidance offered to governors. The LEA has recently produced a Training and Support package for school governors. The school is providing input to inform the timing of the delivery of training, the content of the training materials and the use to be made of the network of governors across clusters of schools
- By reviewing the operation of its own governors' meetings and sub-groups
- The review is looking at:
  - The purpose and terms of reference
  - Roles and responsibilities of Governors
  - Frequency and timing of meetings
  - Content and coverage of meetings
  - Format for meetings
  - Management of meetings
  - Ways of working vis-à-vis governors and the head teacher
  - Scope to combine/rationalise/eliminate meetings and/or sub groups
  - Investigating better ways of presenting the governors' report to parents. The current annual meeting of parents is not considered to be a satisfactory means alone (although there are no plans to drop the meeting, which remains a legal requirement).

## **Benefits**

The review has gained extra head teacher time. Clarification of the governors' role and responsibilities and rationalisation of governors' meetings has also released teacher time which can be used productively for more directly pupil-related duties. Likewise, work with the LEA has assisted governors in preparing for and carrying out their role more effectively.

## **Wider application**

Making best use of governor time and expertise, and minimising the time spent servicing governors, is a common need for all schools. This example shows how one school has sought to initiate and structure a wide ranging review. However, the experience of the school is that it can take a considerable time to make progress on these issues, given the need to involve a wide variety of stakeholders and, in this case, to fit in with LEA priorities and timetables.

## **Further developments**

GovernorNet – the school governors' website is now live – [www.governornet.co.uk](http://www.governornet.co.uk). Designed for governors, following extensive research and feedback, it provides up-to-date information on all aspects of school governance and features links to other useful sites. All information and links are categorised for easy searching and users can also personalise searches, so that information on the site is directly relevant to them.

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*For further details from the school contact: Mrs P Rolt Tel: 01332 760770*

# Ridgeway Infant School

## Reporting on pupil performance to parents

Ridgeway Infant school is a community infant school with 258 pupils aged 5–7.

### Problem

All schools are under a statutory requirement to prepare a written report to parents covering each pupil's achievements related to the national curriculum and attendance. For this infant school, the requirement represented a change from face-to-face to written reporting. Initially, the school used a pro-forma from its Local Education Authority (LEA) for the written report but this proved unsatisfactory for the following reasons:

- The teacher time required to complete the report was lengthy, with each report taking approximately 30 minutes. This meant that each teacher took around 16 hours, typically spread over 8 evenings, to cover a class of children
- There was a lack of consistency in report form content as each report was individually compiled
- There was no match between the report and the national curriculum, other than a statement in each subject area
- The presentation of the report form looked unprofessional.

### Solution

The school introduced a computerised report system that uses a bank of statements developed by all staff within the school. The statements cover five areas as follows:

- 'What I can do': developed from the 'I can' national curriculum statements for each subject area
- How parents can help: the school has agreed that it will fulfil its statutory requirement to report on strengths and weaknesses via positive statements about how parents can help their child and by identifying areas for development
- General progress of the pupil, including strengths and areas for development
- The pupil's contribution to the life of the school
- A message to each pupil.

The system covers all pupils in the school, including those with special educational needs (SEN) for whom the school has also developed a series of statements.

The statements are reviewed annually by the curriculum coordinators, the assessment coordinator and the head teacher, and by the whole school in the event of significant changes to the national curriculum. An assessment co-ordinator is responsible for overseeing the whole process. Teachers were supported in the introduction of the system by a staff-training programme and can access and review the reports from their own classroom.



The school was already equipped with an Optical Mark Reader (OMR) as part of a previous Government initiative. It purchases OMR forms to support the system (at a cost of around £50 per box of forms). The additional cost of the system has been in the up-front development time, assigning an assessment coordinator and the teacher time required to become familiar with the technical information in the bank of statements and the cross-referencing between statements.

## **Benefits**

The benefits of the system were:

- The amount of time teachers spend on preparing reports has been halved: from 30 to 15 minutes per pupil, a saving of 8 hours per classroom teacher for each reporting session
- The accuracy and content of the reports has been improved as they are now focused on the national curriculum
- The presentation of the reports has improved and is considered to be more professional
- The reaction from parents has generally been positive, and Ofsted has also commented favourably on the system.

## **Wider application**

The school believes the system can work in any school. However, it considers that the following key features will aid success:

- Sufficient development time up-front to tailor the bank of statements to ensure that the reports generated are personalised to individual children and to the school
- Allocation of staff development time, initially to develop the system and then on an annual basis to promote ownership and continuous improvement
- The designation of a coordinator – this could be a member of teaching staff or a member of administrative staff.

## **Further Developments**

The 'Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2' examples demonstrate how individual schools can implement good practice in setting up streamlined management and administrative systems across the full range of their activities. It focuses in particular on the introduction of ICT, electronic data handling and the transfer of tasks from teachers to support staff. The examples show how redesigned systems promoted the more efficient processing of tasks and allowed support staff to take on a range of tasks previously undertaken by teachers. There are also direct benefits in terms of clearer pupil reports to parents and better parental access to data on pupil progress.

'Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2' can be found on the Department's Cutting Burdens website ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens)).

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*For further details from the school contact: Mrs P Rolt Tel: 01332 760770*

# St Benedict RC Secondary School

## Assessing pupils and recording results: definition, collation, recording and transmission of data

St Benedict School is a voluntary-aided 11–18 secondary school with 1,452 pupils.

### Problem

The school's processes for recording the results of assessment and disciplinary events are largely manual. The school therefore maintained a series of discrete recording systems in different parts of the school and information was collected and recorded in many different ways. It was time-consuming to compile and update pupil records. Information about assessments, disciplinary events, academic and pastoral events was not easily accessible to other members of staff.

### Solution

The school used the project to develop a single, accessible pupil profile containing a full range of information. The school management system has been developed so that it is accessible to all class teachers, heads of year, heads of department, and members of the management team. This enables teachers to have access to a complete pupil profile in reviewing pupils' academic performance and other academic and non-academic achievements. It also enables staff to interrogate data and produce ICT-generated management information and reports. The school has also explored the interface between its existing electronic attendance system and the school management system.

As part of the implementation of this solution, the school introduced a new ICT network at a cost of just under £11,000. This comprised five networked PCs, software and training. Additional technician hours were also purchased to support the network at a cost of approximately £2,400 per year.

### Benefits

A reduction in the amount of teacher time spent on collating and compiling reports has been achieved. At the interim pupil-reporting stage, reporting is now being carried out by subject group rather than form group. This is saving each form teacher three hours in collating information. Similar savings are anticipated at the full reporting stage. As individual teachers receive training on the ICT equipment, they are transferring records kept on record sheets and in mark books on to the computer, saving a number of hours over the year and facilitating easier sharing of information.

### **Other benefits include:**

- Enhancing access to a full range of pupil information for all staff across the school rather than having separate pockets of information located with different individuals at different places in the school
- Enabling class teachers, teachers with particular responsibilities (e.g. heads of year, etc.) and other professional staff to have access to a fuller pupil profile which aids their interactions with individual pupils
- Permitting members of the school's management team to access, manipulate and interrogate pupil data in order to prepare management reports, respond to requests for information, etc.

The system is undergoing continuous development, with different parts of the school converting in line with a timetable. However, the school is delighted with progress made so far.

### **Wider application**

Although the investment in equipment and training has been substantial, the benefits arising are felt to be making this worthwhile. If a school is able to make the up-front investment, the strategy shown above should result in many long-term benefits.

### **Further developments**

The 'Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2' examples demonstrate how individual schools can implement good practice in setting up streamlined management and administrative systems across the full range of their activities. It focuses in particular on the introduction of ICT, electronic data handling and the transfer of tasks from teachers to support staff. The examples show how redesigned systems promoted the more efficient processing of tasks and allowed support staff to take on a range of tasks previously undertaken by teachers.

The examples highlight improvements that have a direct link to improved teaching and learning including:

- Better pupil data, combined with better quality planning, allowing greater focus on individual pupil progress and higher quality teaching
- Greater clarity over assessment due to establishment of common approaches between departments
- Improved pupil behaviour management due to a combination of better monitoring (due to better and more timely data) and greater consistency of application of sanctions.

'Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2' can be found on the Department's Cutting Burdens website ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens)).

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*For further details from the school contact: Chris Reynolds Tel: 01332 557032 Fax: 01332 553032*

# St Benedict RC Secondary School

## Examinations: invigilation of examinations

St Benedict School is a voluntary-aided 11–18 secondary school with 1,452 pupils.

### Problem

The invigilation of examinations within this school was previously carried out by teachers who were not allowed to do any other work while invigilating. Moreover, the physical distance that is required between students, and the need for there to be at least one teacher for every 16 children, meant that the school found a large amount of teacher time was locked up in invigilation. This was particularly the case where examining and vocational boards had not come to agreements about exam dates.

### Solution

This secondary school has switched to using past pupils and parents (not related to children sitting the exams), paid at an appropriate rate, to act as invigilators.

Five people were used, two of them for six weeks and three for four weeks, each for 5 hours a day. This represented a total of 600 hours. The additional people cost about £6 an hour. The person who acted as a supervisor (and who also supported the examinations secretary) received an additional premium.

### Benefits

The system has freed up teachers for more productive activities such as teaching or other work. It has also helped to maintain links with past students, and with parents.

About 500 teacher hours were saved, with the time being put to use in classroom delivery, curriculum development and visits to primary schools.

The school is delighted with the success of this initiative and is considering widening its use to cover internal examinations. However, it will not be so easy to recruit invigilators for other times of the year, as the pool of former pupils who have returned from college will not be available.

### Wider application

This innovation should be appropriate for use elsewhere.

However, it is likely that the approach will only be suitable for written examinations in which the 'duty of care' can be exercised by a lay invigilator. Likewise there may still be a need for the involvement of professional teachers to ensure that, for example, the correct examinations and test papers are being sat by pupils.

## **Further developments**

The National Agreement of January 2003 states that teachers should not routinely be required to undertake administrative and clerical tasks, which include examination invigilation. The target date for the transfer of this task to support staff is September 2005. However, schools should be working towards achieving the necessary changes as far as possible prior to this by maximising the use of support staff as examination invigilators. An online version of the National Agreement can be accessed through the Cutting Burdens website – [www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens).

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*For further details from the school contact: Chris Reynolds Tel: 01332 557032 Fax: 01332 553032*

# St Benedict RC Secondary School

## Ensuring discipline

St Benedict School is a voluntary-aided 11–18 secondary school with 1,452 pupils.

### Problem

The school's processes for recording disciplinary events are largely manual. The school therefore maintains a series of discrete recording systems in different parts of the school and information is collected and recorded in many different ways. It is time-consuming to compile and update pupil records, and information about assessments, disciplinary events, academic and pastoral events was not easily accessible to other members of staff.

### Solution

The school has developed a single, accessible pupil profile containing a full range of information. This school management system is accessible to all class teachers, heads of year, heads of department and members of the management team. It enables teachers to have access to a complete pupil profile in reviewing non-academic achievements and events of a disciplinary nature as well as pupils' academic performance. It also enables staff to interrogate data and produce ICT-generated management information and reports. The school has established an interface between its existing electronic attendance system and the school management system. This means that individual teachers can record disciplinary and other events electronically and have no need to make paper records.

As part of the implementation of this solution, the school introduced a new ICT network within the school at a cost of just under £11,000. This comprised five networked PCs, software and training. Additional technician hours were also purchased to support the network at a cost of approximately £2,400 per year.

### Benefits

The use of the new system for recording disciplinary events is still at an early stage and many of the teachers are currently undergoing training. However, heads of year have already noted savings of 1–2 hours at the stage of deciding whether suspensions or exclusions may be necessary. Savings are anticipated to increase as a greater proportion of teachers in the school become competent with the system. Time has also been saved in chasing up information from teachers to put into a central record.

The project has also enhanced access to a full range of pupil information to all staff across the school rather than having separate pockets of information located with different individuals at different places in the school.

Class teachers, teachers with particular responsibilities (e.g. heads of year, etc.) and other professional staff are also benefiting from access to a fuller pupil profile. This assists their interactions with individual pupils. Likewise, members of the school's management team can access, manipulate and interrogate pupil data more easily to prepare management reports and respond to requests for information.

### **Wider application**

Other schools with a wide range of methods for recording disciplinary events, which lead to confusion in compiling and recording information and delays between incidents and action, may wish to consider whether a central method of electronic recording will address their problems. The system used in this school is one method of taking this further.

### **Further developments**

To encourage the sharing of good practice and ensure early intervention the Department published a leaflet entitled 'Permanent Exclusions: A Good Practice Guide' in autumn 2002. The Good Practice Guide contains case studies and examples of good practice, and can be ordered from the Department's publications unit on 0845 602 2260 (quote reference LEA/0330/2002). Alternatively, it can be accessed at – [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/lea/bestpractice](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/lea/bestpractice). In addition to this, the Behaviour and Attendance website ([www.dfes.gov.uk/behaviourandattendance](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/behaviourandattendance)) is updated with new best practice on a regular basis.

The Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) is providing substantial additional resources for schools to pilot additional and innovative measures to improve behaviour and attendance in 61 key Local Area Authority areas. It is designed to improve behaviour within schools and reduce truancy and exclusions. It will fund a range of measures including more learning Support Units, electronic registration and truancy sweeps, full-time education for excluded pupils and multi-agency behaviour and education support teams. BIP is the targeted element of the Department's long-term strategy on behaviour improvement, based on the excellent practice already in place.

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*For further details from the school contact: Chris Reynolds Tel: 01332 557032 Fax: 01332 553032*

# West Park Secondary School

## Examinations: use of invigilators

West Park School is a foundation 11–18 secondary school with 1,258 pupils.

### Problem

The school has traditionally used teachers to invigilate all public examinations. As a result some 1,000 hours of teacher time was spent invigilating examinations at an average cost of some £25 per hour or the equivalent of one full-time teacher.

Teachers were frustrated by having to undertake a duty which is boring and time-consuming when they could be spending their time more valuably to the benefit of pupils.

### Solution

The school ran a pilot scheme to employ lay invigilators to replace the teachers.

The existing lunchtime supervisors at the school were employed as invigilators and were required to follow scrupulously the exam board regulations. They were paid for these additional duties on the same pay scale as that used for their existing duties (i.e. approximately £5 per hour).

### Benefits

The benefits of employing these staff on extended duties were:

- The staff were known to the school and had all passed the appropriate vetting procedures
- Family relationships with existing pupils were already known so that any such staff could be excluded from invigilating their relatives in the same way as teaching staff
- The status of the lunchtime supervisors was enhanced in the eyes of both pupils and teaching staff
- The invigilators expressed the view that they were given a much more positive view of the pupils than the one they normally have
- The duties of invigilation were carried out entirely satisfactorily
- The lunchtime supervisors were attracted to the work which enabled them to be paid for additional hours without having to undertake additional travel to and from home
- The teachers released were required to carry out alternative work planned by senior management which was more directly relevant to the teaching of pupils.

The school gained 200 hours extra teaching time from the pilot. A further 50 hours were saved through using non-teachers in wrapping and packaging scripts throughout the examination period.



The school plans to extend the pilot and to consider widening it to include internal examinations as well. The school expects to gain time worth the equivalent of an extra teacher, at a cost of approximately £5,000 for the extra supervisor hours.

### **Wider application**

The substantial benefits noted above should encourage any secondary school to consider this approach for both external and internal exams.

However, it is likely that the approach will only be suitable for written examinations in which the 'duty of care' can be exercised by a lay invigilator. Likewise there may still be a need for the involvement of professional teachers to ensure that, for example, the correct examinations and test papers are being sat by pupils.

### **Further developments**

The National Agreement of January 2003 states that teachers should not routinely be required to undertake administrative and clerical tasks, which include examination invigilation. The target date for the transfer of this task to support staff is September 2005. However, schools should be working towards achieving the necessary changes as far as possible prior to this by maximising the use of support staff as examination invigilators. An online version of the National Agreement can be accessed through the Cutting Burdens website – [www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens).

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*For further details from the school contact: Brian Walker Tel: 01332 662337 Fax: 01332 280767*

# West Park Secondary School

## Examinations: examinations officer role

West Park School is a foundation 11–18 secondary school with 1,258 pupils.

### Problem

This secondary school has traditionally used two full-time teachers to carry out the work of running all the examinations in the school. This is on top of the teachers' normal teaching load of 19 hours (from a 23.5 hours maximum) and therefore attracts additional responsibility points (one teacher is on CPS +3 and the other on CPS + 2).

This was a serious burden and weakened the teaching effectiveness of the teachers concerned. Also the school would prefer instead to allocate responsibility points for the management of teaching and learning.

### Solution

The school reviewed all the tasks being undertaken to carry out the role of Examinations Officer. This revealed that a teaching qualification was unnecessary for their completion. Instead they could all be carried out by non-teaching staff.

The school now plans to transfer the whole task to a member of the non-teaching staff. This will entail employing additional clerical hours and altering the job descriptions of existing non-teaching staff. The timing of this transfer depends upon agreeing the restructuring of the existing teachers' additional responsibility points so that they are allocated to other teaching responsibilities in the school.

As a pilot the school has transferred immediately some of the basic clerical tasks which were otherwise done by the teachers. No difficulties were experienced in having these tasks carried out by non-teaching staff.

### Benefits

The procedures themselves have not been streamlined since most have to fit a format determined by external bodies. However, the school has shown that it can gain more effective and unstressed teachers by transferring what is now recognised as a purely administrative task to non-teaching staff. This transfer is also expected to enhance the responsibilities and status of non-teaching staff in the school.

When the transfer occurs, the school will gain some nine hours per week additional teaching time from the release of the two existing teachers to their full teaching duties.

The cost of gaining this teaching time would otherwise be £8,550 (9 hours x 38 weeks x £25 per hour). The cost of the transfer of these duties to a member of the non-teaching staff will be approximately £6,480 (540 hours x £12 per hour).

## **Wider application**

It is recommended that secondary schools consider the transfer of such examination duties to non-teaching staff within the school.

The current barrier to such a move is the unchallenged and long-standing assumption in many schools that only a teacher can carry out such a task. This appears to stem from the lack of experience of teachers of working in a school where high quality support staff have the opportunity to undertake such work and the natural reluctance of teachers to let go of part of the traditional way of organising school administration.

## **Further developments**

In April 2002 the Government selected a broad cross-section of 32 Pathfinder schools to pilot new ways of working to relieve teacher workload and raise standards. The project started in September 2002 and ran for one academic year. The National Remodelling Team (NRT), led by Dame Patricia Collarbone at the National College for School Leadership, has been established to develop a network of support for all schools building on the learning from the Pathfinder schools. Please see the NRT website for more information – [www.remodelling.org](http://www.remodelling.org).

The effective use of support staff to free teachers to teach, demonstrated by this example of an examinations officer at West Park School, is at the heart of the Government's proposals for reform detailed in the National Agreement of January 2003. The leaflet 'Developing the role of school support staff' contains a summary of the agreed reforms concentrating specifically on the benefits to support staff. The leaflet is available on the TeacherNet website at – ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/remodelling/aprilpackage/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/remodelling/aprilpackage/)).

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*For further details from the school contact: Brian Walker Tel: 01332 662337 Fax: 01332 280767*

# West Park Secondary School

## Reporting to parents on pupil performance

West Park School is a foundation 11–18 secondary school with 1,258 pupils.

### Problem

The school wished to improve its reporting to parents so that a termly report could be given in relation to every subject area.

### Solution

The school is introducing a version of the Schools Information and Management System (SIMS) Assessment and Recording module. This will allow them to do the following:

- Enter the baseline data on Key Stage 2 results for pupils in Year 7
- Enter Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) scores for each pupil using tests to be taken in Year 7
- Enter the results of a twice termly assessment to be made by each department on each pupil using a standardised marking system devised by the department
- Report to parents termly in relation to pupil progress in each subject
- Compose the report without the involvement of teaching staff time by using the data directly from file.

The school has now set up such a system and will be reporting to parents in this new way. As part of the implementation of this solution, the school has purchased an additional five networked workstations at a cost of £5,000.

### Benefits

Apart from the benefit of being able to report to parents more regularly, comprehensively and without more teacher input, the system will also enable teachers to track individual progress more quickly and to take remedial action where necessary. For example, in the pilot, it was instantly clear that a pupil who might have been expected to perform in the top flight was coasting along by performing at the class average without drawing attention to themselves.

### Wider application

The system is one of several possible models for schools wishing to adopt a comprehensive reporting and pupil-monitoring system. It involves no additional work for teaching staff since they are already setting work and recording results manually.

## **Further developments**

The 'Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2' examples demonstrate how individual schools can implement good practice in setting up streamlined management and administrative systems across the full range of their activities. It focuses in particular on the introduction of ICT, electronic data handling and the transfer of tasks from teachers to support staff. The examples show how redesigned systems promoted the more efficient processing of tasks and allowed support staff to take on a range of tasks previously undertaken by teachers. There were also direct benefits in terms of clearer pupil reports to parents and better parental access to data on pupil progress.

'Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2' can be found on the Department's Cutting Burdens website ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens)).

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*For further details from the school contact: Brian Walker Tel: 01332 662337 Fax 01332 280767*

# West Park Secondary School

## Monitoring pupil attendance and discipline

West Park School is a foundation 11–18 secondary school with 1,258 pupils.

### Problem

The school monitors attendance by Optical Mark Reader sheets and the information is passed to the year tutors. Part of their role is to monitor pupil attendance and general discipline so that they have an overview of what each pupil is up to. The year tutors currently keep all their records on paper so that they are available to them as they ring or contact parents by letter or in interviews.

The school wanted these records to be available to other appropriate senior staff so that pupils can be tracked across both academic and pastoral fields.

The school aimed to extend the role of these year tutors in order to make them responsible for the overview of each of their pupils academically as well as pastorally. This required them to have access to the Schools Information and Management System (SIMS) Assessment and Recording module.

It also required the detailed pastoral records – often kept in narrative form in relation to particular incidents – to be kept electronically.

### Solution

The school is using the SIMS MIDAS module together with the Assessment and Recording module. This enables staff to have ready access to up to date information on both academic and pastoral aspects of pupils.

As part of the implementation of this solution the school has purchased an additional five networked workstations at a cost of £5,000.

### Benefits

The use of the two systems in concert allows the academic progress of pupils to be tracked alongside their pastoral development. This will allow more specific monitoring of individual pupils to compare academic and pastoral progress, for example, pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties or underperforming pupils.

More immediate correction/praise and target setting is also possible as the data can be analysed electronically in ways which go beyond the current mental agility of a busy year tutor.

Information about pupil attendance and discipline, formerly kept on paper, is now available on computer. Checking for correlations in patterns of indiscipline, non-attendance, etc. is easier

and, as training becomes more comprehensive, staff will become more creative in their use of the information.

It is anticipated that, over the year, 250 hours will be saved in form filling.

### **Wider application**

The system provides one model for any school wishing to adopt a comprehensive reporting and pupil monitoring system.

### **Further developments**

To encourage the sharing of good practice and ensure early intervention the Department published a leaflet entitled 'Permanent Exclusions: A Good Practice Guide' in autumn 2002. The Good Practice Guide contains case studies and examples of good practice, and can be ordered from the Department's publications unit on 0845 602 2260 (quote reference LEA/0330/2002). Alternatively, it can be accessed at – [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/lea/bestpractice](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/lea/bestpractice). In addition to this, the Behaviour and Attendance website ([www.dfes.gov.uk/behaviourandattendance](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/behaviourandattendance)) is updated with new best practice on a regular basis.

The Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) is providing substantial additional resources for schools to pilot additional and innovative measures to improve behaviour and attendance in 61 key Local Area Authority areas. It is designed to improve behaviour within schools and reduce truancy and exclusions. It will fund a range of measures including more learning Support Units, electronic registration and truancy sweeps, full-time education for excluded pupils and multi-agency behaviour and education support teams. BIP is the targeted element of the Department's long-term strategy on behaviour improvement, based on the excellent practice already in place.

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*For further details from the school contact: Brian Walker Tel: 01332 662337 Fax: 01332 280767*

# West Park Secondary School

## Transfer of pupil information: transfer of baseline information

West Park School is a foundation 11–18 secondary school with 1,258 pupils.

### Problem

This secondary school needed information on the baseline achievements of pupils so that it can 'set' them in advance of the start of term. The school has traditionally asked all pupils in its main feeder schools to complete National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) tests in the Summer term before entry.

The school bought the tests, distributed them to primary schools, collected them and marked them.

Likewise, the primary schools had to devote time to setting and invigilating the tests, estimated at approximately three hours per school.

### Solution

The school dropped the NFER tests. It has instead set the pupils using the teacher assessments for Key Stage 2 or the actual results, if available in time. It also uses Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs) administered during the first term for the new Year 7 pupils to provide more detailed baseline data. NFER is marking the CATs and also carrying out analysis.

The school also intends to collect the data from primary schools electronically.

### Benefits

The secondary school has saved 100 teacher hours in the issuing and marking of the NFER papers (25 minutes per pupil x 240 pupils).

Each of the primary schools gained three hours of teaching time previously spent on administering the NFER tests.

### Wider application

Schools which still require primary schools to administer NFER (or equivalent) tests should now reconsider their value in comparison with the time saved in both the receiving and the feeder schools by using Key Stage 2 teacher assessments or the actual results.



## **Further developments**

The Common Basic Data Set (CBDS) provides a standard for data used in school, education authority, Departmental and other software systems. Because all software suppliers use the same definitions, data can be transferred between different systems.

All schools will need to ensure that core pupil data is held in a format consistent with the CBDS definitions ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/tools/ims/cbds](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/tools/ims/cbds)).

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*For further details from the school contact: Brian Walker Tel: 01332 662337 Fax: 01332 280767*

# West Park Secondary School

## Transfer of pupil information: transfer of basic pupil data

West Park School is a foundation 11–18 secondary school with 1,258 pupils.

### Problem

This secondary school wanted to make greater use of the electronic transfer of records from feeder primary schools in order to prevent the rekeying of basic information.

The school admits pupils from a number of primary schools. About 300 parents make applications to the school direct (as it is a Foundation school). But the same parents are applying to schools elsewhere at the same time and the eventual number of admissions is some 250 annually.

The school has to collect at least basic data on all 300 applicants so that it can communicate with them. Parents fill in an application form with basic data (name of pupil, address, primary school, date of birth, etc.) all of which has to be entered manually into the school's administration system. This takes an average of 6 minutes per pupil: a total of 30 hours work by the particular administrative officer.

Eventually the intake is determined and then further and more detailed information is required from the parent (next of kin and contact addresses, doctor's name and address, whether the pupil is to stay to school lunch, whether the pupil will travel to school by bus, etc.). This takes an equivalent time to input, i.e. a further 30 administrative hours.

At the same time academic assessment information and other records are sought from the primary school through a visit by the head of year.

### Solution

The feeder primary schools have been equipped with Schools Information and Management System (SIMS) data systems and the data currently collected is available in the primary school already (except information on travel arrangements to the secondary school).

The secondary school also has a SIMS system in place.

As part of this project a pilot was therefore carried out between one feeder primary school and this secondary school to transfer the basic pupil data electronically. This was successfully carried out at the end of the Summer term. In future it will be transferred much earlier to save the secondary school inputting it afresh.

### Benefits

The secondary school will gain at least two weeks of clerical time as well as improving the accuracy of the data when it is transferred earlier in the year as is planned in future.

## **Wider application**

The time-consuming clerical procedures in entering pupil data when pupils transfer between schools are well recognised. This pilot showed the difficulties of achieving an electronic transfer of such information in a timely and appropriate format, even between schools which used systems from the same software company. But such a transfer would bring savings in clerical time to all schools involved.

In the case of this school, there was the additional complication of needing to interface with the central Local Education Authority system that is used to transfer Key Stage 2 data from primaries to secondaries.

## **Further developments**

The Common Basic Data Set (CBDS) provides a standard for data used in school, education authority, Departmental and other software systems. Because all software suppliers use the same definitions, data can be transferred between different systems.

All schools will need to ensure that core pupil data is held in a format consistent with the CBDS definitions ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/tools/ims/cbds](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/tools/ims/cbds)).

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*For further details from the school contact: Brian Walker Tel: 01332 662337 Fax: 01332 280767*

# Ivy House Special School

## Special Educational Needs: review of Individual Education Plans process

Ivy House School is a community special school with 71 pupils aged 3–19. The school caters for pupils with severe learning difficulties and all have statements of special educational needs (SEN).

### Problem

The school keeps an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each pupil but in a format which includes much more than the standard requirement for a pupil with SEN. This is because of the multiple and all-embracing nature of the pupils' disabilities. This information is kept in hand-written format with some basic typed material. It is therefore time-consuming to compile and update as well as not being easily accessible to other members of staff.

### Solution

The school used laptop computers in preparing Annual Review forms (of the IEPs). This saved administrative time this year and will shorten teacher time spent on such tasks in future years, as the work has been saved electronically.

The school has simplified the format of the IEP following internal discussions and contact with similar schools under the auspices of this project. The school considers that its paper-based systems are now ready to be translated to electronic form.

What the school sought was an ICT-based system to improve planning, recording, assessment and reporting, by linking all these elements in a manageable, user-friendly system which included the IEP and the school's Record of Achievement. Unfortunately the school failed to find the necessary software despite contacts with the major software suppliers.

The aim to create an ICT network to allow teachers greater access to information within the school, to other schools and with the Department has therefore been frustrated. This is because the particular needs of special schools are not easily met by the market which caters for the general needs of mainstream schools.

In the meantime, the school is training all teaching and Learning Support staff in basic ICT literacy skills in readiness to use the electronic format when it is available.

To support the implementation of this solution the school purchased two laptop PCs at a cost of just over £3,000.

### Benefit

The school has benefited from being able to translate some of its existing information into electronic form using simple word-processing packages. It has also reordered its paper-based

systems so that they can be readily adapted to electronic formats once a suitable package becomes available.

The school anticipates time being saved at all stages of the process once teachers become familiar with the technology. Likewise the intention is for administrative staff to help in the production of IEPs.

### **Wider application**

The project has shown the extent to which a school unused to having access to ICT can reduce the load on teachers by adapting even existing systems into simple electronic formats using standard word-processing packages. It has however identified a significant gap in the market for comprehensive data-handling packages adapted for special schools. The need for these schools is for simple systems which can hold a wider range of data than that required in mainstream schools.

### **Further developments**

The Department included model IEPs in the revised version of the SEN Code of Practice implemented in January 2002. This can be found on the SEN website ([www.dfes.gov.uk/sen](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sen)) which has quick links to other relevant publications and programmes and a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section covering the code of practice and funding.

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*For further details from the school contact: Charlie Farrar Tel: 01332 344694 Fax: 01332 344658*

## Ivy House Special School

### **Preparation and updating of school plans and policies: updating curriculum policies and Schemes of Work**

Ivy House School is a community special school with 71 pupils aged 3–19. The school caters for pupils with severe learning difficulties and all have statements of special educational needs (SEN).

#### **Problem**

Schemes of work and policies have to be regularly updated to accommodate developments initiated by the school as well as by external agencies e.g. the Local Education Authority (LEA), the Department and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA).

While it is the case that the QCA has published a number of exemplar schemes, these have focused mainly on the requirements of mainstream schools rather than the curricular needs of pupils with profound, complex and severe learning difficulties. Thus each new externally-generated initiative has an additional time implication within the school, since the curriculum documents have to be rewritten to differentiate sufficiently to meet the special needs of these pupils. This is a challenging task because it is necessary to provide breadth and balance for a pupil range from 3–19 years within the framework of Key Stage 1 of the national curriculum.

Currently the intensive work involved in updating the Schemes of Work and policies is done by teachers by hand, following consultation with LEA advisers. The hand-written results are then given to administrative staff to word process. This has made the process laborious and frustrating for the teaching staff who have put considerable time and effort into keeping policies up to date and adapted to the special needs of these pupils.

#### **Solution**

The school has trained some teaching staff in basic ICT skills to enable them to update schemes and policies in electronic format. The school has purchased two laptops to enable staff to update the Schemes of Work in their curricular areas. The cost of the two laptop PCs was just over £3,000.

#### **Benefits**

The benefits of the project have been in developing bespoke Schemes of Work which can now be more easily adapted in the future and are easier to access.

In addition, the schemes which have been developed are now in a form which can be linked electronically to the school's medium and long-term planning, assessment and reporting systems which will further reduce the teachers' bureaucratic workload.

No savings in staff time have yet emerged, and there has in fact been extra time taken up as teachers learn to use ICT equipment. However, the school anticipates savings occurring in the future as staff become comfortable with ICT and are able to adapt existing Schemes of Work, etc., rather than produce them from scratch.

### **Wider application**

The project undertaken by this school is a useful pointer to other schools of the advantages of using computers with simple word-processing packages when developing bespoke Schemes of Work.

However, dramatic time-savings will not become possible until centrally produced exemplar schemes are available, as they are for mainstream schools. The QCA is aware of this problem and has taken a number of steps to rectify the position. These include a much fuller access statement – called the Inclusion Statement – which gives special schools detailed information on tailoring the revised national curriculum to meet the needs of pupils across a wide spectrum of learning difficulties.

### **Further developments**

QCA have now developed specific guidance on ‘Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties’, which can be found on the QCA website ([www.qca.org.uk/ca/inclusion](http://www.qca.org.uk/ca/inclusion)). The full inclusion statement can be found on the national curriculum website ([www.nc.uk.net/inclusion.html](http://www.nc.uk.net/inclusion.html)).

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*For further details from the school contact: Charlie Farrar Tel: 01332 344694 Fax: 01332 344658*

# **Good Practice Examples**

## **Kent Pilot Schools**



## Bredgar Primary School

### Teaching the national curriculum: support for lesson planning and subject coordination through ICT

Bredgar Primary School is a four class voluntary-aided 5–11 school of around 100 pupils. The school has a full-time teaching staff of head teacher plus two others with a part-time member of staff to cover the head teacher's class for part of each day.

#### Problem

In schools of this size teachers have a number of particular problems:

- National curriculum subject coordination by so few staff means that each must accept a subject coordinator role in several subject areas
- The level of ancillary help that can be afforded is minimal and the school office is only staffed for 12 hours per week
- Non-contact time is at a premium (even the head has a 0.5 teaching load), so that all lesson and resource preparation, which has to be combined with subject coordination, has to take place outside school hours.

#### Solution

The school believed that significant gains could be made in terms of the current load on teachers by exploiting the use of ICT (through a dedicated laptop with printer and scanner) to improve the effectiveness, speed and quality of response to subject coordination requirements, and to help teachers with aspects of lesson preparation.

The cost of the ICT equipment was £1,500 (the National Grid for Learning laptop could have been used but this would have limited access and reduced the benefits).

#### Benefits

There have been significant improvements in medium-term lesson planning, both in terms of time-savings and quality. Templates for medium-term planning have now been loaded on to the laptop, enabling teachers directly to input information rather than produce them in manuscript for word-processing by the school secretary. The benefits of this are:

- The updating of plans is now much easier, with teachers simply using the laptop to overwrite sections of the plan whilst retaining those parts which remain relevant for the next half-term
- Plans are easier to read as presentation is much clearer
- The secretary is no longer involved in preparation of plans, freeing up administrative time which can now be used for other purposes
- Copies of the relevant documents can be passed on disk to the secretary for filing, as the software on the laptop is compatible with the school's administrative system.

The saving in teacher time is of the order of 50 per cent, amounting to a total annual saving of nine days (three days per teacher) plus a saving of 2–3 days in secretarial time.

There have also been additional benefits in subject coordination:

- The Internet has been used to obtain information on the Literacy Strategy, Schemes of Work and various school policies. New policy requirements (e.g. for an Internet access policy) have been met by downloading and adapting good practice examples with significant time-saving. Elements of the Literacy Strategy and different Schemes of Work have been downloaded and the coordinator has used these to create word-processed lesson plans
- The laptop has been used to develop the skills and knowledge of staff in both the use of the Internet and some of the educational software contained on the machine. As a result, staff and pupils have started to use ICT in the classroom more often and sooner than they would otherwise have been able to. This has led to benefits in terms of lesson quality and quality of pupil outputs, e.g. using the scanner, laptop and printer to create materials and for children to design things in class
- The laptop has been used to record key points from staff meetings, and to produce plans for specific projects.

It is anticipated that use of the laptop will reduce the work and improve the quality of the review and research stage, the preparation of subject development plans and the planning of resource use.

### **Wider application**

Although the costs of the laptop were modest, the school did require some technical help to commission the new laptop, establish the Internet connection and resolve issues of systems compatibility within the school. These are common problems faced by many schools (which can be particularly acute in small schools) and emphasise the need for easy access to expert help for both the purchasing and setting-up of equipment.

### **Further developments**

Over 2,000 useful lesson plans and resources have been placed on TeacherNet to help schools to reduce paperwork and make the necessary lesson preparation as straightforward as possible ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials/Resources](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials/Resources)). This is in addition to the model Schemes of Work on the Standards website ([www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes)). The Schemes of Work are entirely optional and schools can use them as they stand or select parts to draw up their own plans.

Bredgar Primary School has become a Beacon school (ICT is now part of their remit). They have four classes and a roll of 100, with four full time teachers plus a non-teaching head teacher, three Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) working 25 hours per week, and the school office is now staffed full-time. Non-contact time is regular as the head teacher is available to provide this.

Due to the success of using the laptop for planning and recording the school now has five laptops, one for each teacher – two purchased through the New Opportunities Fund (NoF), one from the Headteachers initiative and two using Beacon funds

Reports to parents are now all done on laptops and are sent to the head teacher by e-mail to be checked when convenient. Information is transferred electronically between home and school reducing the need for paperwork. Planning is now all done using ICT and pupil records are kept on spreadsheets.

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*For further details from the school contact: [teacher1@bredgar.kent.sch.uk](mailto:teacher1@bredgar.kent.sch.uk)*

## Bredgar Primary School

### Teaching the national curriculum: support for lesson planning and subject coordination through increased ancillary support

Bredgar Primary School is a four class voluntary-aided 5–11 school of around 100 pupils. The school has a full-time teaching staff of head teacher plus two others with a part-time member of staff to cover the head teacher's class for part of each day.

#### Problem

In schools of this size teachers have a number of particular problems:

- National curriculum subject coordination by so few staff means that each must accept subject coordinator role in several subject areas
- The level of ancillary help that can be afforded is minimal and the school office is only staffed for 12 hours per week
- Non-contact time is at a premium (even the head has a 0.5 teaching load) so that all lesson and resource preparation, which has to be combined with subject coordination, has to take place outside school hours.

#### Solution

The school believed that significant gains could be made in terms of the current load on teachers by the employment of an ancillary assistant for 9 hours per week. The assistant would provide reprographic services and in addition individual support to each teacher for 75 minutes each week on resource management or any other administrative task which the individual teacher determined.

The cost of the ancillary assistant was approximately £50 per week.

#### Benefits

The provision of ancillary assistance has been a major success with significant additional help provided to teachers in undertaking routine and bureaucratic tasks which lie outside the remit of the school's classroom assistants.

The benefits included are as follows:

- Each teacher was allocated time on a specific day and was required to plan what tasks to allocate to the assistant for that day. Teachers became more skilled at planning their work so as to ensure that they made best use of the support
- Tasks were completed at the appropriate time rather than when these could be fitted in by teachers
- The quality of learning materials improved, e.g. digit cards and games for maths lessons.

The head teacher and teachers are confident that they have gained at least the equivalent of the nine hours per week of time for which the ancillary assistant has been employed.

## **Wider application**

This is a good example of significant savings in teachers' time being obtained by a modest investment in non-teaching support. Some initial investment in time was necessary to ensure that certain tasks were undertaken the way the teacher required, however all staff agreed that the benefits gained made this worthwhile.

## **Further developments**

This initiative worked so well that extra support staff have been employed. However, as the staff have undertaken further training and have developed professionally their time has been split between teaching support and administrative support in order to make full use of their new skills.

The main tasks they carry out are:

- Photocopying, filing work, collating portfolio work, reports etc.
- Listening to readers, changing books, monitoring home/school contact diaries
- Making labels and displays, preparing art and science equipment before lessons
- Marking where appropriate e.g maths, levelling and standardising scores using teacher marks for optional Standard Assessment Tests (SATs).

After extra training in intervention strategies they also undertake:

- Additional Literacy Support (ALS)
- Early Literacy Support (ELS)
- Handwriting groups and spelling support using the Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)
- Speech and language development
- Basic numeracy skills workshops.

They meet once a month during school hours to discuss various issues such as training and how this can be delivered (in/out of school) and organisational issues. They are also part of the performance management cycle and have developed their skills in line with what is required for their changing roles within school.

Computer training in specific programmes (word, excel, publisher) was requested by all support staff and was provided by each class teacher. This means that they can now undertake certain tasks using ICT which the teacher had to do before. It also enables them to support pupils in class as ICT has become completely integrated into all curriculum areas and is widely used throughout the school. The school part-funded a new CD ROM with Kent Local Education Authority for the interactive teaching of French in the primary classroom and is developing teaching practice based on using such software with a data projector.

The next step for the support staff is to provide further training for them in how to use the variety of ICT equipment now in school including laptop, data projector, DVD player, pixie and control technology kits.

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*For further details from the school contact: [teacher1@bredgar.kent.sch.uk](mailto:teacher1@bredgar.kent.sch.uk)*

## Bredgar and St James Primary Schools

### Managing and assessing school performance: preparation for Ofsted inspections

Bredgar Primary School is a four class voluntary-aided 5–11 school of around 100 pupils. St James Junior School is a voluntary-aided school for about 270 pupils aged 7–11.

#### Problem

Both schools had their second Ofsted inspections in the Summer Term. There was concern at both about the extent of preparation that might be necessary or desirable to ensure that the inspectors' reports would be as positive as possible, and the extent to which such preparation might divert time and resources from other priorities.

Both schools were anxious to avoid a climate of anxiety about Ofsted and yet were aware that it was likely to be a dominant concern in much of what they did as the inspection week approached.

#### Solution

The project involved recording and analysing in each school the extent to which the school's prioritisation of tasks had been influenced by Ofsted, i.e. what tasks were being undertaken, meetings held, policies reviewed, advice sought, etc. simply out of concern to 'get it right' for Ofsted. The analysis would also include the schools' response to the requests of their Registered Inspector in advance of the inspections.

This analysis was reviewed with the head teachers and with Ofsted with a view to identifying ways in which schools can reduce the burden on themselves and, if appropriate, ways in which contractors can minimise their demands on schools. This review took place before the date of either inspection. However, the points made then have been revisited in the light of the actual inspection and the conclusions in this note reflect both aspects.

#### Benefits

The listing and subsequent analysis of pre-Ofsted activity enabled the schools and representatives of Ofsted to reflect on the assumptions being made about what Ofsted required and what would be likely to present the most favourable image of the school.

Much of the focus of additional work in the schools was on policy-writing or the updating of existing policies, despite the explicit intention of one school not to engage in special preparation but to 'let them judge us as they find us'. In addition, one school felt it necessary to ensure that their governing body was 'up to speed' and would give a good account of themselves when the inspection took place. It was evident also that the impending Ofsted inspections had increased the amount of attention from the Local Education Authority and Diocesan Boards. To some extent this could be regarded as supportive, but it also increased the pressure and the climate of anxiety.

Ofsted was fully aware of the extent to which schools sometimes over-prepare for Ofsted inspections and much of what was recorded by the project schools had already been taken account of in their thinking for further revisions of the Inspection Framework. They were particularly concerned about the impact of Ofsted inspections on very small schools with teaching heads and acknowledged the problem of such schools in responding to the requests of the Registered Inspector in advance of the inspection week.

The other area of general concern was that of policy-writing, where Ofsted expressed the hope that it might be possible to move to a position where school policy documents were only called for by inspectors where there was concern during inspections about policy implementation in a particular area. The inspection arrangements introduced from 1 January 2000 regard schools' policies as primarily a matter of self-audit by the school. Inspectors do not normally require policies in advance of the inspection, and will only need to sample them when on site.

## **Wider application**

All schools can benefit from a measured and planned approach to preparation for Ofsted which builds on normal school routines rather than overlays them. This will be all the more necessary given the shorter notice period proposed for future inspections (although it will also be helped by this particular change).

Particular points for schools to remember are:

- Policies can never all be up-to-date: a well managed school will update policies on a regular cycle and cannot be expected to have all documentation always current. It is more important to demonstrate a well ordered process for policy review and renewal
- The Registered Inspector will require some data in advance and this is defined in the Inspection Framework. Schools should only provide what is asked for and resist the temptation to prepare and provide additional material.

## **Further developments**

Ofsted published a new 'Framework 2003 – Inspecting Schools' document in May 2003. This edition sets out the requirements for school inspections in England from September 2003. It incorporates significant developments in the policy for school inspections and education more generally. It also emphasises the importance of school self-evaluation as a continuous process that is complemented by external inspection and that inspectors must take full account of the school's analysis of its own performance when planning the composition and deployment of inspection teams. The framework document and further information on inspections can be found on the Ofsted website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

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*For further details from the school contact: [teacher1@bredgar.kent.sch.uk](mailto:teacher1@bredgar.kent.sch.uk)  
[headteacher@stjamesjunior.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@stjamesjunior.kent.sch.uk)*



## Bredgar primary school

### Working with governors: review of governing body structures

Bredgar Primary School is a four class voluntary-aided 5–11 school of around 100 pupils. The school has a full-time teaching staff of head teacher and two others with a part-time member of staff to cover the head teacher's class for part of each day.

#### Problem

The head teacher finds that she must provide support to the governing body in its work to ensure that the governing body is kept informed about their responsibilities and are addressing them. The burden on the head teacher (in her first headship and with a 50 per cent teaching load) is considerable and has included routine administration (e.g. sending out agendas pending recruitment of a clerk to the governors).

There are a number of contributory factors to this situation. Significant issues include the mix of skills on the governing body and the existence of an over-complex structure of governor's committees based on the school's understanding of what was expected of it rather than the actual needs of a small school.

#### Solution

The solution was to work with the head teacher and chair of governors on a combination of strategies:

- More school-based governor training on key areas of responsibility
- A review of the committee structure and distribution of responsibilities
- Improved arrangements for clerking.

A review of the governing body structures did result in a reduction from seven to four in the number of governing body committees. The committees now deal respectively with personnel, curriculum, finance and buildings, including health and safety.

There were no financial costs associated with this change.

#### Benefits

The benefits of the review of the governing body committee structure are:

- The work of each committee is now more focused
- There is less overlap
- Some of the burden on the head teacher and teacher governor has been reduced with fewer meetings to attend and prepare for
- The clerk is now better equipped to undertake pre-meeting circulation of papers and the preparation of minutes, a task formerly undertaken by the head teacher.

## **Wider application**

The key point for other small schools is that benefits can accrue from reducing governing body structures and processes to a level that is proportionate to the size of the school, the business in hand and the resources available to support the governing body.

Achieving the right balance of skills and experience on a governing body to meet the school's needs and reduce the burden on staff is difficult. Training is important but does not necessarily help provide specific skills, such as financial management, where these are absent.

Governors and head teachers faced with this problem might find it productive to start with a skills audit among existing governors. They could then jointly consider the key gaps in expertise and develop a strategy to fill them.

## **Further developments**

GovernorNet – the school governors' website is now live – [www.governornet.co.uk](http://www.governornet.co.uk). Designed for governors, following extensive research and feedback, it provides up-to-date information on all aspects of school governance and features links to other useful sites. All information and links are categorised for easy searching and users can also personalise searches, so that information on the site is directly relevant to them.

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*For further details from the school contact: [teacher1@bredgar.kent.sch.uk](mailto:teacher1@bredgar.kent.sch.uk)*

## Otford Primary School

### Special Educational Needs: administration of special educational needs

Otford Primary School is a community school catering for about 225 pupils aged 5–11. It has a high number of children with special educational needs (SEN) including children with statements. It also caters for a significant number of Traveller families.

#### Problem

The school has pioneered more effective methods for management of the administrative aspects of the Code of Practice stages and for responding to the need to meet the internal requirements of the school as well as the external demands of the Local Education Authority (LEA) including the LEA's SEN Audit.

The net result for the SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO) is a system which works well but which still generates a very heavy paper-based workload, notwithstanding the acknowledged effectiveness of the methods introduced.

#### Solution

The school believed that the next logical step was to replicate the current systems in electronic form. This would exploit the ability of ICT to transfer pupil and family data without tedious copying as the child progresses through the stages and through the school, and generally to lift some of the bureaucratic burden for all teachers, but in particular the SENCO, associated with SEN.

With the assistance Department for Education and Skills, existing pro forma have been developed as standard computer-based formats. The SENCO has been provided with a laptop dedicated to SEN use and all casework management, including production and updating of Individual Education Plans (IEPs), will in future be done by electronic means. The school is also able to maintain an electronic SEN register.

The laptop is also allocated to individual teachers as and when they need to update relevant records for their pupils. If successful, the formats may be made available more widely as a number of local schools already use the basic SEN management system pioneered at Otford.

The cost of the laptop was £1,600. In addition, the school has needed to invest time in getting all the details entered for each pupil. The time varied between teachers depending on the numbers of pupils with special needs in each class and is estimated at three teacher days for the whole school. The SENCO also spent the equivalent of one day in discussions with and coaching other staff, and in preparing instructions and guidance notes.

## Benefits

The benefits are mainly in the form of:

- A reduction in time taken to complete various forms, e.g. initial concern form (saving of 15 minutes per form), IEP (saving of up to 30 minutes per form) and notes of in-school review meetings (can be typed straight on to the laptop in the meeting, saving time and speeding up the issuing of these to attendees)
- Fewer hours worked by the SENCO outside her normal contracted time on administrative tasks, while enabling at least part of the work to be done off-site
- A reduction in routine administration through the use of new technology, more effective tracking of children with SEN and ease of access to information, e.g. during visits by the Educational Psychologist or other specialists
- The creation of electronic pupil records for ease of updating and to facilitate transfer of records as pupils move on (a particular need with traveller families).

## Wider application

The project has the potential to be replicated in other schools with similar time-savings and other benefits. Copies of the forms have already been taken by LEA representatives as examples of good practice which will be promoted to other schools within the LEA.

One of the main difficulties has been the varying IT skill levels and confidence of staff. Teachers required a degree of competence and confidence to be able to apply the procedures and whilst many were able to do so, some found it quite difficult. Whilst some staff are comfortable keying in information during discussions with parents, others find this quite difficult and prefer to make notes and type these up later. This should change once skills and confidence levels increase.

## Further developments

The Department included model IEPs in the revised version of the SEN Code of Practice implemented in January 2002. This can be found on the SEN website ([www.dfes.gov.uk/sen](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sen)) which has quick links to other relevant publications and programmes and a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section covering the code of practice and funding.

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*For further details from the school contact: Sharon Saunders [otfordcp@rmplc.co.uk](mailto:otfordcp@rmplc.co.uk)*

## Salmestone Primary School

### Teaching the national curriculum: improved administrative support to teachers

Salmestone Primary School is a 5–11 community school of about 440 pupils.

#### Problem

The priority for the school is raising standards of literacy and numeracy. The support staff budget is dedicated to the deployment of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) to work directly with children with learning difficulties. The school has a high concentration of pupils with special educational needs. LSAs have been specifically trained to work with pupils. There are no conventional classroom assistants with a more general support role. Teachers therefore get even less support with certain routine tasks than is usually the case.

The objective of this project was to seek to relieve the bureaucratic burden for teaching staff, where it is currently not possible to provide specific administrative support to teachers, and to do this without detracting from the school's drive on numeracy and literacy in which most support staff are currently engaged.

#### Solution

Following discussions with a group of teachers, it was agreed that the school would develop a new teachers' assistant role. The aim was to relieve the burden on teachers by delegating tasks which did not need to be done by teachers such as photocopying, classroom display, preparation of materials and the maintenance, stocktaking and distribution of subject-based resources. The school received funding to employ an assistant for 20 hours per week during the summer term. The time was divided equally between teachers working in Years 2, 3 and 6, who were given responsibility for managing the resource.

Each teacher identified tasks which would be undertaken by the assistant and spent time briefing the assistant on what was required. The initial investment in teacher time to delegate the various tasks was minimal. A broad summary of how the time was used in the period showed the following:

- Marking and collation of the non-statutory Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) – (the school has bought in optional SATs) 34%
- Displaying pupils' work 20%
- Providing class-based support (Key Stage 1 only) 16%
- Filing pupil records, reports and work 13%
- Support for Physical Education and games 6%
- Photocopying 5%
- Shredding 2%
- Labelling 2%
- Assisting in the library 2%.

The class-based support which took place in Year 2 included reading with pupils, helping children to get ready for lessons and some ICT support. The marking of optional SATs papers was considered appropriate to delegate and this did not require any interpretation.

## **Benefits**

The project is viewed by teachers, the head teacher and governors as a great success. The three teachers involved feel that their time is being used more effectively by improving the professional content in their work. They were able to use the time on tasks such as updating Science and ICT policies and Schemes of Work during the term, instead of in the summer break.

The assistant also helped in preparing detailed analyses of SATs results for all years, providing valuable information to teachers and the management team much earlier than would normally be possible.

The school calculated that the net gain in teacher time was equivalent to the 20 hours per week that the assistant was employed.

The head teacher and governors then agreed to extend the project by employing two part-time assistants (the equivalent of 1.5 staff units), one for Years 1–3, the other for Years 4–6 for the 1999/2000 academic year. The cost of this was less than half the salary of a teaching post.

The breakdown of tasks and time was influenced by the time of year that the pilot took place. The school envisages that over a full academic year, both the range of tasks and the proportion of time spent on each would change. The high concentration of time of SATs activity reflects the fact that this was an important administrative activity which needed to be undertaken at that time.

## **Wider application**

The project has the potential to be adopted by other schools. The minimal time investment required makes it possible to get immediate gains. It may be possible to offer additional hours to someone who is already employed in a non-teaching capacity. The key factor is realising the potential benefits. Had the school not been given the pump priming money (i.e. the set-up funds for the project), it is unlikely that they would have considered adopting this approach as early as this. However, having piloted the use of the teacher assistant, they were sufficiently convinced to review the budget to enable them to continue and extend the use of the assistant role.

## **Further developments**

The effective use of support staff to free teachers to teach, demonstrated by this example from Salmestone School, is at the heart of the Government's proposals for reform detailed in the National Agreement of January 2003. The leaflet 'Developing the role of school support staff' contains a summary of the agreed reforms concentrating specifically on the benefits to support staff. The leaflet is available on the TeacherNet website at – [www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/remodelling/aprilpackage/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/remodelling/aprilpackage/). Further information on the developing role of Teaching Assistants including case studies can also be found on TeacherNet at – [www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingassistants](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingassistants).

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*For further details from the school contact: [teacher1@salmestone.kent.sch.uk](mailto:teacher1@salmestone.kent.sch.uk)*

# Salmestone Primary School

## School maintenance: managing Health & Safety

Salmestone Primary School is a 5–11 community school of about 440 pupils.

### Problem

The head teacher of this primary school was aware that ineffective systems for managing health and safety in the school were causing additional burdens on himself and staff.

The root of the problem lay in an unclear division of responsibilities between head teacher and governors and an ineffective framework for the carrying out of routine health and safety checks. The result was an ad hoc approach which created additional burdens.

Problems were exacerbated by the constantly changing requirements of legislation and advice and the need to ensure that the school's information on this remained accurate. Whilst the Local Education Authority (LEA) had helpfully put together a manual covering health & safety, the upkeep of this was also proving to be a burden.

### Solution

The school's objective was to develop a framework within which the full Health & Safety responsibilities of the school were met but with maximum efficiency through proper sharing/delegation of tasks, thus reducing the bureaucratic burden.

Having mapped the process, it became evident that most of the responsibility for health and safety was falling to the head teacher personally. Also, roles and responsibilities for governors and staff were not established and the check mechanisms for ensuring that things got done were unclear. As a result there was a high risk that key responsibilities in this area could at least slip, or at worst, not happen at all.

A number of actions were agreed following the mapping exercise which included consultants providing the head teacher with a risk assessment model (from another school) from which the school could:

- Prepare its own approach
- Check the relevant guidance to determine what actions were necessary and how frequently these needed to be undertaken
- Reach agreement between the relevant governor for health and safety and the head teacher on roles and responsibilities.

The result of this is that the school developed an annual calendar showing which tasks needed to be undertaken in each month and who was in the lead on each of these, e.g. the designated governor, the head teacher or the caretaker. The school also designed a health and safety risk assessment worksheet for use when undertaking workplace assessments.



This identified the following six aspects: areas of the school covered; hazards identified; when discovered; assessment of the level of risk; action proposed; and who is responsible for taking action forward. There was also scope to indicate cost implications where known. The designated governor has been working through the guidance to determine what exactly needs to be done for each of the areas on which the school is required to take action.

There were no additional financial costs that arose from this solution.

## **Benefits**

Responsibilities which were previously left to the head teacher have now been shared as appropriate, not only with governors but also with teachers and with the school administrative staff. Governors are now better able to maintain their strategic oversight of health and safety issues and undertake checks to ensure that the strategy is effective, whilst leaving operational duties to school staff. It is intended in the longer term to revise and extend the job description for the caretaker role to cover a number of the day-to-day operational responsibilities which at the moment remain with the head teacher.

The new system is now operational but it will take time for the cycle of activities to be completed. However, the principal benefits have already been identified and these include:

- Clearer roles and responsibilities with better coverage of the key health and safety responsibilities of the school
- A better audit trail of actions and more effective means of monitoring and reporting, including to the governing body
- Reduction of the risk of safety issues slipping through the net and not being addressed
- Relieving the head teacher of inappropriate tasks.

## **Wider application**

This systemised approach to health and safety based on a regular audit and clear allocation of responsibilities should be transferable to other schools. It not only improves the quality of health and safety management but also reduces wasted effort and the burden on the head teacher and other senior managers in the school.

## **Further developments**

A dedicated area on the TeacherNet website has been created to give access to all aspects of health and safety which affect schools ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/healthandsafety](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/healthandsafety)). The areas covered include:

- Health and safety: responsibilities and powers
- Health and safety on educational visits
- Supporting pupils with medical needs
- First aid for schools
- Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

- School security
- Coping with the sudden death of a pupil
- Rights of way through school premises.

An area dedicated to emergency planning will also be added to TeacherNet soon, with the aim of helping schools create an emergency plan in collaboration with their LEA. It will be at – [www.teachernet.gov.uk/emergencies](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/emergencies). In the meantime, for questions relating to emergency planning and for updates on latest news and advice, please see the Cabinet Office's UK Resilience site ([www.ukresilience.info/home.htm](http://www.ukresilience.info/home.htm)).

Advice on how to deliver health and safety education through the national curriculum can be found on the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) area on TeacherNet ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/pshe](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/pshe)).

Bursars can also play an important part in managing health and safety in schools – ranging from knowledge of the main health and safety issues and how they relate to pupils, staff, visitors and contractors; through to establishing a comprehensive disaster and recovery plan, and implementing loss prevention strategies to reduce insurance costs. Please see the Bursars website on TeacherNet, particularly the modular job description in the 'Looking for a Bursar?' document, for further details ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursars](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursars)).

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*For further details from the school contact: [teacher1@salmestone.kent.sch.uk](mailto:teacher1@salmestone.kent.sch.uk)*

## St James Primary School

### Reporting to parents on pupil performance: use of ICT-based system

St James Junior School is a voluntary-aided 5–11 school of about 270 pupils.

#### Problem

The amount of time devoted by teachers to the annual process of preparing reports for parents on their children's progress can be excessive. This school had already moved to a semi computer-based system in order to reduce the workload on teachers, but had found the software package and bank of statements available inflexible. Also, the task could not be performed in the classrooms, relying on paper forms to be completed and fed into an Optical Mark Reader (OMR) to generate the reports. Thus much of the work was done by teachers in their own time. Particularly time-consuming was the writing of comments on each pupil for the different subject areas, in addition to the pre-prepared statements generated by the package.

#### Solution

The school wished to move to a fully ICT-based solution for generating reports, using a more flexible software package.

The existing system consisted of a package which provided the schools with a range of descriptions of pupil performance in the various subject areas. Teachers looked through the set of possible statements for each pupil, and selected the code for the most appropriate entry, on a card capable of being read by an OMR. The card was then passed to the school administrative office and fed into a reader to produce a pupil report. This report was then returned to the teacher, who checked and added information on the attendance of the pupil, also including subject marks and personal comments. The report was then sent to the head teacher for signing before it was dispatched to parents.

The new system uses a more sophisticated software package which allows teachers to create their own bank of statements and then to produce the reports directly on screen without using cards or an OMR. This has made the reports more 'personal'. There is also the facility to work out absence information.

Teacher access to the system has been made possible through the introduction of an ICT network throughout the school which gives teachers access from the classroom through networked PCs. The previous package was only accessible via the school secretary's PC which was not available to teachers in school hours.

The cost of the refined software packages was in the order of £400. The cost of the ICT network throughout the school was £8,000 including a server, two workstations and VDUs, cabling, all licences and on-site support. The school intends to expand the network to cover all classrooms when funds allow.

## Benefits

The original semi computer-based system achieved a major saving in time over the previous manual system. Class teachers noted a saving of half an hour per child in the compilation of the reports (i.e. 17 hours for a class of 34 children) once the system was operational. Most teachers at the school also preferred the computerised system to the old manuscript one.

The refined package has made a further saving of six hours per class for teachers, due to a reduced input in writing personal comments and by calculation of absence information. It has also reduced the flow of paper between teachers and the school administration office.

The refined package produces a higher quality report to parents with more information. Feedback on the new reports from parents has been generally positive. However, there remain a number of parents who distrust computer-based reports. Ironically, the new package has highlighted to some parents for the first time that teachers are using a computer package, as the previous system was less professional in appearance and closer to the old manual system.

## Wider application

The system has the scope to be applied across the country. The major savings in time come from the change from a manual to a computer-based system of any form. Further refinements do produce further savings, but not on the same scale. It is also worth highlighting that the school required a significant amount of technical support to install the ICT network and the new software package. This included work to make the new package compatible with the system used by the school for its general pupil database.

There remained a body of parents who disliked computer-generated reports. The school needed to explain that the reports do encompass the more personal and individualised comments that these parents assume are contained only in manual reports.

## Further developments

The 'Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2' examples demonstrate how individual schools can implement good practice in setting up streamlined management and administrative systems across the full range of their activities. It focuses in particular on the introduction of ICT, electronic data handling and the transfer of tasks from teachers to support staff. The examples show how redesigned systems promoted the more efficient processing of tasks and allowed support staff to take on a range of tasks previously undertaken by teachers. There were also direct benefits in terms of clearer pupil reports to parents and better parental access to data on pupil progress.

'Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2' can be found on the Department's Cutting Burdens website ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens)).

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*For further details from the school contact: [headteacher@stjamesjunior.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@stjamesjunior.kent.sch.uk)*

## St James Primary School

### Preparing/updating school plans and policies: planning for the literacy hour

St James Junior School is a voluntary-aided 5–11 school of about 270 pupils.

#### Problem

This primary school, like most, has devoted significant time to planning for and implementing the new Literacy Hour and wants to ensure that effective use is made in future years of material that has been identified and collected for use in lessons.

#### Solution

The school is monitoring the amount of time teachers spend devising the content of the Literacy Hours with a view to reviewing whether improvements can be made by greater collaboration within the school and with other schools.

Staff have been retaining material used during the year to be put this on to disk, thereby speeding up the planning and resourcing processes for subsequent years.

The school is also piloting the use of commercially-produced material that has recently become available to see whether this substantially reduces the time required for lesson planning.

#### Benefits

The school has aimed to reduce significantly the amount of time teachers spend identifying, collecting and customising material for the Literacy Hour. Staff are now retaining a bank of information about materials used during the year. This information will be stored electronically for easy access this year and in the future.

By the autumn term of 1999/2000, only one year-group had 'converted' to accessing the previous year's materials when planning Literacy Hour activities. However, the time-saving from this was already apparent, with use of the 'bank' reducing the time taken for weekly planning and finding resources from an estimated 2–3 hours to less than one hour per week. The school intends to use the lessons learnt for the Numeracy Hour.

#### Wider application

Other schools may wish to adopt lessons from this school, particularly in the introduction of the Numeracy Hour.

## **Further developments**

Over 2,000 useful lesson plans and resources have been placed on TeacherNet to help schools to reduce paperwork and make the necessary lesson preparation as straightforward as possible ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials/Resources](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials/Resources)). This is in addition to the model Schemes of Work on the Standards website ([www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes)). The Schemes of Work are entirely optional and schools can use them as they stand or select parts to draw up their own plans.

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*For further details from the school contact: [headteacher@stjamesjunior.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@stjamesjunior.kent.sch.uk)*

## Hartsdown Technology College

### Reporting to parents on pupil performance: use of ICT in report writing

Hartsdown Technology College is a mixed 11–18 community school of about 1,100 students.

#### Problem

Hartsdown has a strong commitment to regular and informative reporting to parents on student performance. Currently this involves half-termly report summaries and full subject-based annual reports.

The relative ease of access by staff to ICT through the college's network has led to the desire to exploit more fully its potential in report writing. This desire arises from dissatisfaction with Optical Mark Reader (OMR) generated statement banks currently used, which although written by the college, are regarded as impersonal. In addition, there have been problems with their inflexibility, repetitive nature, the clumsiness of the final product, the amount of checking and rewriting involved and the impact on the school office of converting OMR sheets to printed text.

#### Solution

The project sought to produce a single report-writing system on the college's network which enables all staff to generate reports on screen with access to a range of standard statements but with the ability to add or amend them (or not use them) as appropriate. All checking (including spell-checking) would be done on screen and the report only printed when complete and agreed. Ideally, links to data on test and exam results would enable downloading of relevant data direct on to the report format.

Initially, the college's preference was to write and develop its own software. The consultants supporting the project advised against this on the grounds that in-house software is difficult to keep updated and well-maintained, and that the suitability of existing products should be tested. The next step therefore was to write a Specification of User Requirements (SOUR) describing precisely what the software had to achieve. This helped college staff to focus on the essential features they were looking for and for a clear specification to be sent to major suppliers of educational software. A sample SOUR for a reporting to parents system is shown in the Bureaucracy Cutting Toolkit, in Annex D – [www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens).

The initial response from suppliers was to offer to demonstrate to staff at the college the extent to which their products met the SOUR. However, college staff, having a clear understanding of what they wanted, were reluctant, however impressive the demonstration, to accept systems which in their view were too complex, or involved commitments they did not wish to make to parallel assessment systems.

One company decided, after discussion with the college, to adapt their product to achieve the accessibility and flexibility the college felt was necessary to persuade the more reluctant ICT users to move to this form of report writing.

The school received about £2,000 from the project to assist with software procurement/development and the training necessary for a pilot of the new system. The software company offered to undertake the development work and initial data transfer without charge to the college.

## **Benefits**

One main benefit for the college arising from this project was a much clearer focus on what they were trying to achieve. This was facilitated by the writing of a SOUR and the subsequent discussions with the software company.

The potential benefits which the pilot will now test out are:

- A Windows-based report-writing system, simple enough for the college to insist that all teachers use it
- Complete flexibility in the choice between off the peg and bespoke text
- A greatly reduced workload (by use of on-screen editing at all stages) in the area of checking and rewriting of reports by teachers and in the conversion of OMR sheets to printed text by office staff
- A higher quality product with better focus on the individual student.

## **Wider application**

The drawing up of a SOUR before procurement of software by schools is a valuable discipline in ensuring clarity about what is wanted. Outside the context of the project it will not always be possible to persuade a software supplier to modify a standard product or to help the school set up the necessary interface with other systems the school may use. However, the process will enable schools to achieve effective purchasing in support of school systems in an increasingly complex market.

## **Further developments**

Having explored all the options available the college decided to develop a 'home grown' system which meets their requirements for a single, flexible report writing system.

ICT support is available for schools through the Department's Managed Services Initiative. The Department has approved a number of suppliers to provide, install and service ICT equipment in schools at a reasonable rate. For more information and a list of suppliers in your area, visit the NGfL website (<http://managedservices.ngfl.gov.uk>).

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*For further details from the school contact: [jwilson@hartsdown.kent.sch.uk](mailto:jwilson@hartsdown.kent.sch.uk)*



## Hartdown Technology College

### Managing ICT: ICT technician support

Hartdown Technology College is a mixed 11–18 community school of about 1,100 students.

#### Problem

Since gaining technology college status, Hartdown has invested heavily in ICT, including developing a whole school network. An early decision was to employ a well-qualified ICT technician to meet the college's day-to-day needs. This provision was subsequently increased to two technicians, who between them offer a comprehensive ICT service to all faculties.

In the event, the rate of ICT expansion was such that much of the technicians' time was taken up with managing the expansion of the network, commissioning new equipment and undertaking development work of advanced technical complexity. This diversion of the technicians' time seemed expedient and likely to save considerably on the use of outside contractors. However, it was to the detriment of the more routine support required by staff and students.

#### Solution

The current project has sought to establish a basis for deployment of the ICT technicians which maximises the benefit to the college, but in a more conventional support role to staff and students, and on a properly structured and managed basis. An important objective has been to maximise the cost effectiveness of technician support (e.g. by achieving the right balance between in-house maintenance and external maintenance contracts) while ensuring a responsive support service to individual members of staff, to faculties and to senior managers.

While the college would not claim that all objectives have yet been fully achieved, it is clear that certain features of the arrangements are likely to prove the key to their eventual success. These features are:

- Line management of the technician service by a member of the senior management team who has no faculty or subject responsibility
- Introduction of a standard referral system, using a simple proforma, on which all work, other than emergency repairs, must be requisitioned
- Gatekeeping of access to outside contractors (whether or not through existing maintenance contracts for particular systems or equipment) by the ICT technician who first decides whether the problem can be resolved in-house
- Consultation with the ICT technician when education software is to be purchased to ensure that licensing, compatibility and capacity issues are considered before resources are committed
- Involvement of the ICT Technician in the development of whole school ICT policy to ensure proper consideration of the technical implications (e.g. the capacity of the network servers) of proposed developments.

The project has not involved any additional financial cost to the school.

## Benefits

To use scarce technician time effectively, it is essential that teachers cooperate by planning in advance what support they might require, and by being willing to use the requisitioning procedures rather than relying on personal approaches.

Although further work needs to be done on these aspects, the benefits of a whole college ICT technician service are already evident. They can be summarised as:

- The in-house capacity to maintain and develop the network on which the college increasingly depends (an equivalent quick response service from an outside provider would be prohibitively expensive)
- Saving on new purchases through recycling/assembly of hardware
- The provision of a routine repairs and maintenance service leading to less 'downtime' for teachers and students and less demand on the teacher's time for help in rectifying faults
- The availability of general ICT advice and consultancy to a staff with mixed ICT experience and skills on an individual and faculty basis
- The avoidance of problems through the proper management of licensing issues, system security, purchases and the commissioning of new software.

## Wider application

The success factors set out above are likely to be applicable to any secondary school developing an in-house ICT technician service.

A customer satisfaction survey among teachers was undertaken as part of the project evaluation. Points of interest for other schools arising from this were:

- The unanimous view that ICT technician support is essential but evidence of some frustration, having benefited from the service, that demand has outstripped supply
- A variety of views on priorities, but most teachers rating network management and emergency repairs as the most important
- A substantial majority of teachers feeling that the ICT technician service had relieved them of non-teaching tasks, increased the usability of equipment and enabled students to make better use of ICT for their own studies.

Consideration should however be given to the need to motivate and retain technicians who may be working in an education environment for the first time. Many will come to the work with prior experience in industry (often as a post-retirement job). They will usually have been used to working in a highly-structured environment. It is important therefore that systems in schools not only make good use of their skills but also guard against a lack of structure in the way skills are accessed and used. This will prevent a loss of job satisfaction for the technicians.

## **Further developments**

Hartsdown has now increased the number of ICT technicians to three.

ICT support is available for schools through the Department's Managed Services Initiative. The Department has approved a number of suppliers to provide, install and service ICT equipment in schools at a reasonable rate. For more information and a list of suppliers in your area, visit the NGfL website (<http://managedservices.ngfl.gov.uk>).

The ICT directory section of the National Remodelling Team (NRT) website ([www.remodelling.org](http://www.remodelling.org)) gives further advice to help schools assess their ICT resource requirements and plan accordingly. The 'training and support' module gives specific advice on improving ICT technical support and details of the strategic ICT management training available.

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*For further details from the school contact: [jwilson@hartsdown.kent.sch.uk](mailto:jwilson@hartsdown.kent.sch.uk)*

# Hartsdown Technology College

## Collection of money from pupils

Hartsdown Technology College is a mixed 11–18 community school of about 1,100 students.

### Problem

This school collects nearly £40,000 per year in cash and cheques from pupils for a wide variety of activities such as school journeys, educational visits, sale of books and materials and charity collections.

Until three years ago, the collection and safekeeping of these monies was the responsibility of tutors. Money was handed to them in the 15-minute registration period at the beginning of the school day. This was considered to be unsatisfactory for the following reasons:

- The process was burdensome to tutors and made inroads into the small amount of time available for more important issues
- Accountability for money paid in was confused
- Formal recording and issuing of receipts to pupils was not practicable
- Teachers were unable to guarantee the security of cash left with them and regarded the task as an unreasonable responsibility.

### Solution

The school has transferred all money collection, with the exception of three non-uniform days per year, to the school office. The system works as follows:

- The teacher responsible for the activity informs the office that money is to be collected, how much is due from each pupil and by when
- Pupils pay money (in whole or in instalments depending on circumstances) direct to the designated member of the office at the reception desk
- Pupils are encouraged to do this between 8.15 and 8.50am (start of registration) but may do so at any time during the day
- On payment the pupil is issued with a receipt which records the amount, the purpose and any amount still outstanding. The office retains a copy
- Each payment is recorded as it happens on a daily ledger by the member of the office staff, with daily totals for each fund recorded in the accounts.

The additional cost of the system is in the time of the member of the office staff responsible for collecting and recording payments (accounting and banking money collected was already done in the office under the old system of collection). The additional time is estimated to average five hours per week of a clerical officer's time across the school year, which equates to a cost of about £1,000 per year.

## **Benefits**

The benefits of this system are threefold:

- Greatly improved arrangements for collecting, recording and accounting for money, and for ensuring its security and the protection of staff
- Relief for teachers from a task which many find inappropriate, risky and burdensome
- A saving of scarce tutorial time.

The teacher time saved is estimated to average three minutes per tutor per day throughout the year, or a total of about 315 teacher hours per year across the school.

## **Wider application**

The school believes this system can work in any secondary school. However, the following key features will aid success:

- A designated member of office staff who is on duty for at least 30 minutes before the start of school
- Access to back-up for that staff member at peak periods (mainly early July) or in the event of absence
- An open reception area where there is room for pupils to queue and wait without disrupting the circulation of others.

## **Further developments**

The National Agreement of January 2003 states that teachers should not routinely be required to undertake administrative and clerical tasks, which includes collecting money. A full list of these tasks and the target dates for their transfer to support staff can be found on the Cutting Burdens website ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens)).

Specific advice to help schools transfer these tasks is contained in the 'Match staff to activities' section of the Bureaucracy Cutting Toolkit. However, schools are advised to work through all the stages of the Toolkit (1 to 7) in order to gain the maximum impact on reducing teachers' workload. The Toolkit and the National Agreement can also be accessed through the Cutting Burdens website.

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*For further details from the school contact: [jwilson@hartsdown.kent.sch.uk](mailto:jwilson@hartsdown.kent.sch.uk)*

## Skinner's Secondary School

### Teaching the national curriculum: management of curriculum options at GCSE and A level

Skinner's School is a single-sex boys selective 11–18 foundation school of about 700 pupils.

#### Problem

This secondary school is moving gradually to make greater use of ICT in gathering and handling pupil data. As a further step it wishes to capture the choices of pupils at GCSE and A level electronically as part of a review of its current process for managing curriculum options. This should also allow the data to be used electronically for timetabling, assessment and examination entries.

#### Solution

The school is employing a copy typist for 60 hours as a one-off exercise to enter all the pupils' options, forms and set lists into an appropriate database. Data can then be manipulated electronically to assist timetabling, assessment and examinations administration. In future years the task will be undertaken by existing administrative staff within the school.

The cost of the copy typist is just over £400.

#### Benefits

The new approach will relieve the deputy head teacher of a significant burden and make the data more readily available to teachers and administrative staff involved in other activities. It will also reduce the amount of time used in re-entering data for assessment, timetabling and examinations purposes.

Much of the input to this process falls either prior to, or in, the first half-term of the school year. The deputy head has estimated that his own input in constructing timetabling 'option blocks' will reduce from 15–20 hours to one hour per year. Introduction of the database will cut the administrative input from 15–20 hours to 5–6 hours per year.

#### Wider application

The use of an appropriate database for handling pupil data in this way should be applicable to other secondary schools which have not already moved to this position.

#### Further developments

The 'Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2' examples demonstrate how individual schools can implement good practice in setting up streamlined management and administrative systems across the full range of their activities. It focuses in particular on the introduction of

ICT, electronic data handling and the transfer of tasks from teachers to support staff. The examples show how redesigned systems promoted the more efficient processing of tasks and allowed support staff to take on a range of tasks previously undertaken by teachers.

The examples highlight improvements that have a direct link to improved teaching and learning including:

- Better pupil data, combined with better quality planning, allowing greater focus on individual pupil progress and higher quality teaching
- Greater clarity over assessment due to establishment of common approaches between departments
- Improved pupil behaviour management due to a combination of better monitoring (due to better and more timely data) and greater consistency of application of sanctions.

'Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2' can be found on the Department's Cutting Burdens website ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens)).

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*For further details from the school contact: Peter Braggins Tel: 01892 520732*

# Skidders' Secondary School

## Delivery of PSHE through outside agencies

Skidders' School is a single-sex boys selective 11–18 foundation school of about 700 pupils.

### Problem

The delivery of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme in Years 10 and 11 of secondary schools covers complex specialist areas such as drugs, HIV and sexually-transmitted diseases, and stress awareness. These specialist areas are outside the 'mainstream' for many teachers and a considerable investment in staff training is necessary for them to be delivered in a professional and credible way. Furthermore, some teachers can feel uncomfortable in delivering these lessons.

### Solution

This secondary school decided to deliver the PSHE programme for Years 10 and 11 in a series of all-morning sessions held over the year, with outside expertise from relevant agencies (such as the police and young persons' clinic) brought in to deliver the specialist areas. Many of these agencies charge for this service and can cost up to £50 per hour. Pupils cover two specialist areas in a morning.

### Benefits

A good quality PSHE programme has resulted, delivered by credible specialists who are recognised as authoritative and knowledgeable by pupils and teachers. While there is a greater time commitment for the school's PSHE coordinator in liaising with outside agencies, this is more than offset by the reduced burden on the rest of the teaching staff in preparing for and delivering subjects outside their normal specialisms. The programme is highly regarded by the Local Education Authority.

### Wider application

The school believes this method of delivery should be possible for other schools. It recommends that a first task should be to network with other schools in order to ascertain the availability of services from specialist agencies and, just as important, the abilities of particular individuals to deliver in the classroom. The school has found specialist knowledge does not necessarily mean that an individual has the necessary skills to transmit information to pupils. Assessing this ability is currently one of the main tasks of the school's PSHE coordinator.



## **Further developments**

The PSHE website on TeacherNet ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/pshe](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/pshe)) gives access to resources, training, professional development and support for schools. This includes a comprehensive resource database and a 'shared experience' case studies section. The site is aimed at teachers of PSHE Key Stages 1–4 and of Citizenship Key Stages 1 and 2. PSHE includes everything schools do to promote pupils' good health and well-being and is backed by the National Healthy Schools Standard.

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*For further details from the school contact: Peter Braggins Tel: 01892 520732*

## Five Acre Wood School

### Teaching the national curriculum: specific advice for special schools

Five Acre Wood School is a 5–19 all-through special school for about 70 children with severe learning difficulties (SLD).

#### Problem

Five Acre Wood's policy, in common with most special schools, is to give children full access to the national curriculum, including associated initiatives such as numeracy and literacy. It does not believe that disapplication of the national curriculum should be used except in the most exceptional of circumstances, notwithstanding the very low levels of attainment of many children with severe learning difficulties.

The difficulty faced by this and similar schools is that initially most national curriculum material and initiatives were developed primarily for mainstream primary and secondary needs. Yet special schools are expected (and want) to introduce new material to the same timetable as mainstream schools. This problem of modifying and adapting requirements to make them appropriate for pupils with severe learning difficulties relies on individual schools or schools acting jointly in informal consortia.

As a result, the bureaucratic burden on special school teachers in developing materials and targets suitable for their children which are compatible with the relevant national curriculum, Ofsted and literacy/numeracy frameworks is considerable.

#### Solution

The local solution to these problems for this school has been the development of strategies through the network of SLD schools in the Local Education Authority (LEA) working together on target setting and curriculum materials. This has been time-consuming and does not answer the basic issue of whether the initial materials should not be more special school friendly. Moreover it does not meet the needs of the very many such schools in much smaller LEAs where such networks are less easy to establish (e.g. the other SLD school in the project was the only school of its type in its LEA).

As part of the project, the issues raised by special schools have been discussed with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). The QCA acknowledged that while many special school heads had enjoyed the challenge of delivering the national curriculum, they felt isolated and under-supported with reason.

The QCA has therefore taken a number of steps to rectify the position:

- A fuller access statement – the Inclusion Statement – was published in November 1999 ([www.nc.uk.net/inclusion.html](http://www.nc.uk.net/inclusion.html)). This gave schools detailed information on tailoring the national curriculum to the needs of individual children with learning difficulties across a spectrum of learning difficulties classified in eight different levels

- This initiative was synchronised with the launch of the main national curriculum review
- Ofsted is required to recognise the Inclusion Statement and guidance in their inspection of special schools
- The Becta website ([www.becta.org.uk](http://www.becta.org.uk)) provides information, advice and dialogue related to ICT in education – from case studies and examples of good practice to practical guidance on using ICT within the curriculum and for administration.

## **Benefits**

The benefits are that special schools receive the same level of appropriate support, guidance and advice from the QCA as mainstream schools and to the same timetable. This should greatly reduce the number of wheels being invented and the burden on head teachers and class teachers.

## **Wider application**

The results of this exercise should be of relevance to all special schools for pupils with learning difficulties.

## **Further developments**

QCA have now developed specific guidance on ‘Planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties’, which can be found on the QCA website ([www.qca.org.uk/ca/inclusion](http://www.qca.org.uk/ca/inclusion)).

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*For further details from the school contact: [jekratochvil@portables1.ngfl.gov.uk](mailto:jekratochvil@portables1.ngfl.gov.uk)*

## Five Acre Wood School

### Special Educational Needs: management of annual review process

Five Acre Wood School is a 5–19 all-through special school for about 70 children with severe learning difficulties (SLD).

#### Problem

Every child in the school has a statement of special educational needs as well as an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Every statement must be formally reviewed in conjunction with parents and other agencies as appropriate on the anniversary of the statement being made. IEPs are reviewed at regular intervals during the year.

The administrative burden in a school of this type is considerable, falling mainly to the six class teachers, as well as the head teacher. It is exacerbated by the uneven flow of statement reviews across the year, the various formats in which information about pupils needs (including their statements and IEPs) are held, and the multiplicity of other agencies which must be kept informed and may wish to attend review meetings.

At the start of the project, some teachers were completing the various forms in manuscript, others were using their own home-based PCs. IEPs were taking up to two hours each to prepare and annual reviews between three and four hours.

The process was unsatisfactory in that:

- Any amendments to reports prepared in manuscript resulted in these having to be rewritten
- The school had difficulty in maintaining an audit trail and was concerned about teachers holding confidential pupil information on their own PCs
- There was a lot of repetition, with teachers having to record the same basic details on different forms.

#### Solution

The school decided to develop an ICT basis for the preparation of all documentation using two dedicated laptops, with one laptop allocated to the lower part of the school and another to the upper part. Responsibility for recording the routine details for each pupil (i.e. core information on page one of IEPs/Annual Reviews) was passed to the School Administration Officer (SAO).

The SAO now monitors the timetable for annual reviews, issues a floppy disk with the core information already completed and the teacher completes the review. The disk with the completed review is then passed to the head teacher to be checked and so that she can add her contribution to the report. Any amendments can be made with ease. Disks with completed reports are retained by the SAO.

The costs of the two laptop PCs was £3,000 in total. In addition, there was the investment in the time required to get the core information set up electronically for all pupils, which took the SAO a full day.

## **Benefits**

The benefits of the system are:

- Teachers are no longer required to enter core details, which are already completed when the disk is issued
- An ability to cut and paste text where relevant which saves time
- It is easier to quality review and amend reports, with time saved by not having to rewrite manuscript copies
- Improved streamlining of the process, particularly where a number of people have to contribute to the report
- It has introduced a discipline in meeting the timetable for completion of reports
- All electronic copies of reports are retained in the school as part of a wholly electronic pupil record-keeping system.

The school also feels that having reports in a standard format looks more professional. A spin-off benefit is that this has encouraged some teachers to develop their IT skills. The laptops will also be put to other uses within the school, including preparation of minutes of annual review meetings and the streamlining of curriculum planning.

## **Wider application**

Although the benefits are substantial and will increase as the new system beds in, the project has experienced some teething problems. Having started with all six teachers expected to use the two laptops, the timing of some annual reviews meant that demands on the two laptops were arising at the same time.

Those teachers who had previously completed reports on their home PCs found it frustrating when they had to wait for access to a laptop. The school has since agreed to allow teachers to work at home using their own PCs, but working with floppy disks issued by the school with strict controls, to ease the pressure. In hindsight, the project would have benefited from piloting the use of the laptops with just two teachers.

## **Further developments**

The Department included model IEPs in the revised version of the SEN Code of Practice implemented in January 2002. This can be found on the SEN website ([www.dfes.gov.uk/sen](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sen)) which has quick links to other relevant publications and programmes and a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section covering the code of practice and funding.

For further information on the developing role of Bursars / Senior Administrative Officers, please see the Bursars website on TeacherNet ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursars](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursars)) which includes:

- details of the training available from the National College for School Leadership
- the 'Looking for a Bursar?' document, containing a modular job description to help schools assess their needs and train and/or recruit accordingly
- case study examples, including shared bursar arrangements in smaller schools.

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*For further details from the school contact: [jekratochvil@portables1.ngfl.gov.uk](mailto:jekratochvil@portables1.ngfl.gov.uk)*

## Five Acre Wood School

### Managing ICT: ICT technician service

Five Acre Wood School is a 5–19 all-through special school for about 70 children with severe learning difficulties (SLD).

#### Problem

In many cases, the children's learning in this special school is aided by special equipment, much of it electronic and some of it purpose-designed to an individual child's needs. In addition, there is a heavy reliance on conventional ICT equipment in teaching and learning.

Maintaining this equipment on a day-by-day basis has been a major problem and distraction for teaching staff. Breakdowns do occur and there were no on-site resources to deal with such events. Teachers and learning support assistants would attempt minor repairs, but most were technically complex and required assistance from outside.

For teachers, this often resulted in wasted time on attempted repair (for which they are not trained) of faulty equipment or the commissioning of new equipment. For students, there was interruption to education while awaiting repairs to equipment which the school could not deal with, but on which the students depended.

#### Solution

The school decided to employ its own part-time (0.5) technician to service all its equipment repair and maintenance needs. The objectives were:

- Immediate attention in the event of breakdowns
- Routine maintenance to reduce failure
- Provision of technical advice to teachers
- Better purchasing and commissioning of new equipment
- Reduction of the reliance on, and the cost of, maintenance contracts
- A more consistent approach to such matters as health & safety and asset management and recording.

In the term and a half leading up to the appointment of the technician, the school logged most incidents where intervention was needed on ICT and other electronic equipment. This showed a total of 74 incidents of which only 46 per cent could be resolved in-house.

The total staff time diverted was:

- Deputy head teacher: 9 hours
- Teachers: 108 hours
- Support staff: 89 hours.

This averaged about 11 hours per week. The cost of the technician was in the region of £6,000 per year for a part-time (0.5 full-time equivalent) post.

## **Benefits**

The head teacher and staff consider the investment in an ICT technician as an unqualified success. An immediate result has been a decision to make the position permanent and to increase the technician's hours from 15 to 20 hours per week at the expense of learning support assistant hours.

The principal benefits have been:

- Virtually all repair and maintenance needs met in-house
- Previously logged teacher and support staff input to problem-solving and repair eliminated (estimated at about 400 hours per year)
- Much reduced incidence of essential teaching and learning aids being unavailable
- Improved management of ICT purchasing through the school budget and commissioning of new equipment and software
- Proper inventory of software maintained, all hardware security marked
- Equipment more effectively deployed and shared, with redundant software deleted to free up memory and reduce system failures
- Staff competence and confidence in use of ICT enhanced including simple fault-finding and rectification.

## **Wider application**

The school successfully recruited a well-qualified person from a strong field despite a pay rate equivalent to a learning support assistant. All candidates were set practical tests under the supervision of an experienced technician from another SLD school within the Local Education Authority. The effectiveness of their interpersonal skills and ability to relate to children with disabilities were also assessed.

The amount of equipment in this type of special school is substantial. However, schools with proportionately less equipment per pupil increasingly need this kind of expertise in support of teaching. Many secondary schools now have equivalent posts. Primary schools might want to consider a consortium or cluster approach to establishing and sharing a post of this kind to meet their growing ICT needs.

## **Further developments**

The National Agreement of January 2003 states that teachers should not routinely be required to undertake administrative and clerical tasks, which includes ICT trouble shooting and minor repairs and commissioning new equipment. A full list of these tasks and the target dates for their transfer to support staff can be found on the Cutting Burdens website ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens)).

Specific advice to help schools transfer these tasks is contained in the 'Match staff to activities' section of the Bureaucracy Cutting Toolkit. However, schools are advised to work



through all the stages of the Toolkit (1 to 7) in order to gain the maximum impact on reducing teachers' workload. The Toolkit and the National Agreement can also be accessed through the Cutting Burdens website.

ICT support has become more readily available for schools following the Department's Managed Services Initiative. The Department has approved a number of suppliers to provide, install and service ICT equipment in schools at a reasonable rate. For more information on this initiative and for a list of suppliers in your area please visit the NGfL website (<http://managementservices.ngfl.gov.uk>).

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*For further details from the school contact: [jekratochvil@portables1.ngfl.gov.uk](mailto:jekratochvil@portables1.ngfl.gov.uk)*

# **Good Practice Examples**

## **Non Pilot Schools**

## Langley Park School for Girls, Bromley

### Site and buildings management

Langley Park is a single sex girls 11–18 foundation school of over 1,300 pupils.

#### Problem

The school has set out to reduce the administrative load on teaching staff, and in particular those with management responsibilities, in order to maximise their availability for professional leadership and teaching.

This strategy has had two main aspects:

- Acquiring expertise to manage functions previously managed by teachers
- Transferring administrative work traditionally undertaken by teachers to support staff.

The examples in this note relate to the acquisition of expertise.

The school had found that premises management was requiring significant amounts of senior management time in:

- Determining priorities for, and overseeing, repairs and maintenance
- Drawing up plans for site use and improvement
- Ensuring health & safety.

#### Solution

Two areas of expertise were introduced so as to enable day-to-day management of these issues to be at arm's length, with a substantially reduced involvement of teaching staff. These were:

- The employment of a firm of professional building surveyors to assess and advise on the maintenance priorities in the school, to seek tenders and to supervise work in progress
- The creation of a site manager post at a level of expertise and authority which enables the holder of the post to manage site staff, take a lead in site development issues and generally relieve senior teachers of front line caretaking, cleaning and security management.

#### Benefits

The successful development of the site manager post has now enabled the role of the surveyors to be taken on by the site manager as an entirely in-house function

The outcomes are regarded as highly satisfactory by the school and include:

- A reduction in teacher time spent on premises management issues
- Better use of the limited resources available for care and maintenance of the premises.

## **Wider application**

This approach to site and premises management will become increasingly applicable in most secondary schools and large primary schools as greater responsibilities for buildings are delegated.

## **Further developments**

Bursars can also play an important part in site and building management in schools – ranging from security of the site and preparation of maintenance schedules; through the letting of school premises; to drawing up outline specifications for new buildings including tendering, obtaining planning permission and liaising with contractors and architects. Please see the Bursars website, particularly the modular job description in the ‘Looking for a Bursar?’ document, for further details ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursars](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursars)).

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*For further details from the school contact: [lchristians@lpgs.bromley.sch.uk](mailto:christians@lpgs.bromley.sch.uk)*

## Langley Park School for Girls, Bromley

### Transfer of administrative work to support staff

Langley Park is a single sex girls 11–18 foundation secondary school of over 1,300 pupils.

#### Problem

The school has set out to reduce the administrative load on teaching staff, and in particular those with management responsibilities, in order to maximise their availability for professional leadership and teaching.

This strategy has had two main aspects:

- Buying in expertise to manage functions previously managed by teachers
- Transferring administrative work traditionally undertaken by teachers to support staff.

The examples in this note relate to the transfer of administrative work to support staff.

#### Solution

The school has established four discrete roles which have enabled the transfer of substantial administrative tasks, traditionally undertaken in the main by teachers, to support staff.

These roles are:

- Examinations secretary
- Administration secretary for pupil records, admissions and Form 7
- Report and assessment secretary
- Work experience secretary.

The examinations secretary works full-time in term-time only, undertaking all aspects of examinations administration. This includes maintaining day-to-day contact with the examinations boards, undertaking all work involved in exam entries, making the internal arrangements in the school for rooming and invigilation (including for mocks), processing/recording and analysing results, drawing up exam timetables (including for Standard Assessment Tests – SATs) and assisting with the timetabling of Key Stage 4 options. The holder of the post reports to a senior member of the teaching staff, but in practice the role is largely autonomous, and involves undertaking work previously done at deputy head or senior teacher level.

The administration secretary for pupil records works full-time for 43 weeks a year exclusively on maintenance of the school's pupil database, managing the admissions process (including the transfer of information from primary school and the appeals process) and completing returns requiring pupil data, such as Form 7. Aspects of these tasks have always been office-based but with significant input from, and management by, teaching staff. The dedicated role now developed is largely autonomous and has relieved teachers of direct involvement.

The secretary responsible for reports and assessments works full-time for 40 weeks a year and manages the production of all reports to parents (based on Optical Mark Reader-generated statement banks) including ensuring that the timetable for the cycle of report writing is applied, reminding teachers of the deadlines for production of reports and obtaining the necessary clearances internally before reports are sent home.

The work experience secretary is employed for 20 hours a week during term-time only, to arrange all aspects of the school's work experience programme. This includes the initial and ongoing contact with local employers, the detailed arrangements for placement of individual pupils, information for parents and post-placement reports from employers. This post has moved this traditionally teacher-led task into the school office with minimal teacher input.

## **Benefits**

The net effect on teacher time saved through the creation of these four posts is substantial. The school emphasises that one major advantage has been the decision to establish these as specialist posts and the consequent development of expertise in the area concerned. That expertise has then been available to advise and support teaching staff and other support staff as necessary.

## **Wider application**

These functions are common to all secondary schools and are still undertaken largely by teaching staff. Such schools would benefit from considering transferring these functions in whole or in part to support staff.

## **Further developments**

The Personal Assistant to the Headteacher – who works 36 hours per week (hpw), 52 weeks per year (wpy) – now does all Personnel related administration, enabling the contract with the Local Education Authority to be cancelled saving approximately £7,000 per year. The Business Manager buys in Personnel advice on an ad hoc basis as and when required.

School Administrative Officer (SAO) retired August 2002 (36 hpw, 52 wpy). Tasks have been absorbed by others and the role has not been replaced.

Examinations Officer (35 hpw, 42 wpy) now does all teacher cover (previously done by SAO) as well as Examinations administration. Examinations Officer has an assistant on an ad hoc basis during examination periods to help deal with workload. A pool of Exam invigilation assistants (non teaching) attend in place of teachers as and when required.

A team of four Cover Assistants (30 hpw, 39 wpy) oversee classroom cover for absent teachers. This is not a teaching role, but they ensure that pupils undertake the work that has been set and maintain discipline.

Finance Manager (36 hpw, 42 wpy) oversees all public and non public funds with a finance assistant (26 hpw, 40 wpy) who deals specifically with non public funds. Elements of public funds were previously administered by SAO. Other elements of the SAO work have been absorbed by the Business Manager.

Additional Receptionist (15 hpw, 38 wpy) is employed to help with early morning duties plus pupil absence monitoring.

A Curriculum Assistant (35 hpw, 38 wpy) undertakes work of a specific curriculum nature ranging from word processing, spreadsheets, and powerpoint presentations to photocopying and displays.

Work Experience Officer (25 hpw, 40 wpy) now has an assistant on an ad hoc basis to help with health and safety visits and administration.

Librarian (35 hpw, 40 wpy) now has an assistant (30 hpw, 40 wpy).

The school has appointed two more Technology technicians, an additional ICT technician and two daytime cleaners (10.30 – 15.00 to maintain standards of cleanliness and reduce graffiti and litter).

Resources Manager role has been discontinued – three resource technicians (35 hpw, 40 wpy, 28 hpw, 40 wpy and 10 hpw, 40 wpy) now manage this busy department under the supervision of the Business Manager.

For further information on the Department's programme to develop the role of Bursars/ Business Managers in schools, please see the Bursars website on TeacherNet ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursars](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursars)) which includes:

- details of the training available from the National College for School Leadership
- the 'Looking for a Bursar?' document, containing a modular job description to help schools assess their needs and train and/or recruit accordingly
- case study examples, including shared bursar arrangements in smaller schools.

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*For further details from the school contact: [lchristians@lpgs.bromley.sch.uk](mailto:lchristians@lpgs.bromley.sch.uk)*

## Brentwood County High School, Essex

### Use of administrative assistants

Brentwood County High School is a mixed 11–18 foundation school with over 1,300 pupils.

#### Problem

The need to contain, and where possible reduce, general bureaucratic demands on teachers.

#### Solution

The Bursar is charged with ensuring that all existing and new processes are 'staff friendly' and that the Schools Information and Management System (SIMS) system is fully exploited. When new procedures and systems are introduced, the extent to which these replace existing procedures and systems is rigorously explored so that the overall burden is not increased.

The school has also sought to provide direct administrative support to teachers to relieve them of specific tasks and to provide support to them in their teaching and pupil management roles.

This has been achieved by providing each of the seven faculties with its own administrative assistant. Each assistant works 20 hours per week within the faculty and reports on a day-to-day basis to the faculty head whilst being line managed by the Bursar.

The core duties of the assistant are:

- Reprographics
- Ordering materials and equipment
- Basic faculty administration (e.g. class lists)
- Data collection and returns.

In practice, according to the needs of the individual faculties, the assistants have been able to provide administrative support across a wider range of functions including:

- Educational visits and other school trips
- Preparation of teaching materials
- Correspondence with parents
- Progress chasing
- Maintenance of resources and stocktaking.



## **Benefits**

The impact in terms of improved support for teachers and the relief from some bureaucratic tasks has been substantial, with the benefit also being felt within each faculty's departments. The policy of locating staff in the faculty and of maintaining continuity (rather than, for example, providing an arm's length service from the school office) has enabled individual secretaries to accumulate both knowledge and expertise about their faculty and its procedures. From this has grown the ability and readiness to expand the administrative support role beyond the more routine office functions.

Despite a difficult budget in the current year, the consensus among staff was that the current level of administrative support to teachers through their faculties should be maintained.

## **Wider application**

Departmental administrative support can play a significant part in reducing the bureaucratic burden on teachers in all secondary schools. Whether it should be located in the school office or in the relevant Department will be a matter for each school to determine.

## **Further developments**

For further information on the Department's Bursar Development Programme please see the Bursars website on TeacherNet ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursars](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursars)). This includes details of the bursar training available and case studies demonstrating their line management role for administrative and other support staff, including teaching assistants.

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*For further details from the school contact: [fair@bchs.essex.sch.uk](mailto:fair@bchs.essex.sch.uk)*

# Arthur Mellows Village College, Cambridgeshire

## Use of support staff audit

Arthur Mellows Village College is a mixed 11–18 foundation school with over 1,200 pupils.

### Problem

For the past seven years the school has pursued a policy of optimising the use of its support staff and thereby reducing the administrative burden on teachers.

The approach to this, led on behalf of the senior management team by the bursar, was founded initially in a detailed audit both of customer needs and support staff skills.

Customers – mainly middle and senior managers on the teaching staff – were interviewed to ascertain what their future requirements were for support and to identify areas of work which might be carried out more cost effectively by support staff should the opportunity arise.

Support staff were surveyed:

- To clarify the extent to which jobs mirrored existing job descriptions
- To gather views on the value/necessity of existing tasks
- To ask for suggestions for improvements to current working methods and organisation, and to issues concerning location, equipment and access to line management
- To undertake a skills audit (in particular to identify skills not currently being used) and establish training needs.

### Solution

Drawing on this data a medium-term plan was drawn up and agreed for the development of the role of the administrative function and the improvement of its capacity to contribute to the working of the college. This has provided the foundation for a number of changes that have been introduced as time and resources have allowed. Many of these were focused on meeting the college's need for better administrative support.

However, the plan also included measures to ensure the personal development, through training and performance monitoring, of support staff. The provision of career paths for support staff was seen as an important element in raising both self-esteem and their status within the college.

## **Benefits**

Developments which have flowed from this initial audit and planning phase include the creation of specific support staff roles in:

- Finance and financial management
- Property management
- Pupil data management
- The introduction of a support staff appraisal system which picks up some aspects of the original staff audit as well as providing a basis for personal development and performance monitoring.

## **Wider application**

This approach to a whole school audit and planning of support staff requirements has potential for any school seeking to address the balance of administrative tasks undertaken by teachers and support staff.

## **Further developments**

The effective use of support staff to free teachers to teach, demonstrated by this example at Arthur Mellows School of creating new roles following effective audit and planning, is at the heart of the Government's proposals for reform detailed in the National Agreement of January 2003. The leaflet 'Developing the role of school support staff' contains a summary of the agreed reforms concentrating specifically on the benefits to support staff. This is available on the TeacherNet website at – [www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/remodelling/aprilpackage/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/remodelling/aprilpackage/).

Bursars can play an important role in the line management of increasing numbers of school support staff – including teaching assistants. Please see the Bursars website on TeacherNet for case study examples which demonstrate this ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursars](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursars)).

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*For further details from the school contact: [glinton@amvc.schoolzone.co.uk](mailto:glinton@amvc.schoolzone.co.uk)*

# Hinchley Wood School Surrey

## School trip administration

Hinchley Wood is a mixed 11–16 foundation school of 850 pupils.

### Problem

Part of the remit of the school's Business Manager has been to investigate ways in which administrative tasks undertaken by teachers could be carried out more efficiently including, if appropriate, by transferring them to support staff. The objectives have been not only to reduce the burden on teachers but also to make savings through more effective procedures. A number of improvements and changes to practice have resulted. These include school trips, management of capitation budgets and reprographic services for teachers. This good practice example concerns the administration of school trips

### Solution

In common with many schools, the responsibility at Hinchley Wood for all arrangements for school trips rested with the department or member of teaching staff organising the event. Significant teacher time was required to collect money from pupils, undertake bookings, obtain the necessary consents and settle accounts after the trip had taken place.

There was concern that many trips exceeded their budget and had to be subsidised, often because cash received from pupils fell short of estimates. As a first step to rectify this, all cash collection was transferred to the school office with money paid in (if necessary in instalments) using a system of sealed envelopes and a special post box in the office wall where money could be deposited without the need for queuing or the immediate attention of office staff. Office staff kept trip receipt accounts on behalf of the department concerned.

It soon became apparent that the school office was well placed to provide a more comprehensive service on school trip administration than simply cash collection.

As a result the following aspects are now managed within the school office for all school trips:

- Booking of transport/purchase of tickets
- Booking of accommodation
- Obtaining parental consent and details of medical/dietary needs
- Obtaining governing body consent where this is required.

### Benefits

The saving in teacher time, both within departments and in the tutorial system, has been significant. The amount of income collected is now much closer to the estimates (and the calls on the school fund proportionately reduced) as a result of more methodical collection and accounting systems, and the ease with which pupils may deposit money.

## **Wider application**

This approach to school trip administration could be adopted in any secondary school which arranges a significant number of school trips.

## **Further developments**

The principal of transferring administrative tasks from teachers to support staff, as demonstrated by this example from Hinchley Wood, is expanded upon in the 'Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2' document. This shows how schools can implement good practice in setting up streamlined management and administrative systems across the full range of their activities. It also highlights the importance of effective ICT and electronic data handling to achieve this. The examples show how redesigned systems promoted the more efficient processing of tasks and allowed support staff to take on a range of tasks previously undertaken by teachers.

'Good Practice in Cutting Bureaucracy/2' can be found on the Department's Cutting Burdens website ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens)).

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*For further details from the school contact: Mrs Collins Tel: 0208 398 1310*

# Hinchley Wood School, Surrey

## Departmental budget management

Hinchley Wood is a mixed 11–16 foundation school of 850 pupils.

### Problem

Part of the remit of the school's Business Manager has been to investigate ways in which administrative tasks undertaken by teachers could be carried out more efficiently including, if appropriate, by transferring them to support staff. The objectives have been not only to reduce the burden on teachers but also to make savings through more effective procedures. A number of improvements and changes to practice have resulted. These include school trips, management of capitation budgets and reprographic services for teachers.

This good practice example concerns the management of capitation budgets by departmental budget holders. The capitation element of the school's budget is distributed to departments which have delegated authority to purchase books, stationery and consumables. Departmental allowances are allocated on an annual basis and it is for the department concerned to ensure that the allowance covers the year's needs and meets its budget.

The experience of the school suggested that a number of heads of department found this budget management role difficult and time-consuming. Lack of resources for essential purchases, accumulation of unspent balances, or uneven patterns of spending all suggested that some additional help was needed.

### Solution

The solution to this problem was for:

- Budget holders to provide an annual estimate of how and when they planned to spend their allowance
- The finance officer to provide systematic, but simple, management information to each budget holder in the form of a monthly monitoring report on expenditure against the plan.

This procedure has simplified budget management for teachers and resulted in improved value for money in purchasing as well as savings in teacher time.

### Wider application

This approach to departmental budget management has the potential to ease the burden on departmental heads in most secondary schools.

## **Further developments**

The Management directory section of the National Remodelling Team (NRT) website ([www.remodelling.org](http://www.remodelling.org)) gives further advice on the effective running of schools. The 'financial management' module helps schools to improve and streamline their financial management, through self-evaluation tools and information on financial management standards, consistent financial reporting, budgeting, assets management plans, building design and networking technologies.

Bursars have an important role in effective school finance management. Please see the Bursars website on TeacherNet ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursars](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/bursars)) which includes:

- details of the training available from the National College for School Leadership
- the 'Looking for a Bursar?' document, containing a modular job description to help schools assess their needs and train and/or recruit accordingly
- case study examples, including shared bursar arrangements in smaller schools.

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*For further details from the school contact: Mrs Collins Tel: 0208 398 1310*

# Hinchley Wood School, Surrey

## Provision of reprographics

Hinchley Wood is a mixed 11–16 foundation school of 850 pupils.

### Problem

Part of the remit of the school's Business Manager has been to investigate ways in which administrative tasks undertaken by teachers could be carried out more efficiently including, if appropriate, by transferring them to support staff. The objectives have been not only to reduce the burden on teachers but also to make savings through more effective procedures. A number of improvements and changes to practice have resulted. These include school trips, management of capitation budgets and reprographic services for teachers.

This good practice example concerns the provision of reprographic services for teachers. The school took the view that time spent on photocopying and text processing was an inappropriate use of teacher resources. It was agreed that teachers should have access to a service which, with adequate notice, could undertake all but the most urgent reprographic work to meet both their teaching and their administrative needs.

### Solution

A dedicated service now operates providing text-processing and photocopying exclusively for teachers. Teachers must hand in work 24 hours before it is needed although the school is now looking at the possibility of introducing a shorter notice period for some categories of work.

### Benefits

The service has the strong support of teachers and is fully used. Among the benefits have been:

- Teacher time saved
- Improved quality of reprographics
- A wider range of work possible: for example colour photocopying has been introduced
- Fewer mechanical breakdowns, as copying is undertaken by a trained operator.

### Wider application

This approach to supporting teachers with their text-processing and photocopying needs is appropriate to most secondary schools and many primary schools.



## **Further developments**

The National Agreement of January 2003 states that teachers should not routinely be required to undertake administrative and clerical tasks, which includes bulk photocopying. A full list of these tasks and the target dates for their transfer to support staff can be found on the Cutting Burdens website ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/cuttingburdens)).

Specific advice to help schools transfer these tasks is contained in the 'Match staff to activities' section of the Bureaucracy Cutting Toolkit. However, schools are advised to work through all the stages of the Toolkit (1 to 7) in order to gain the maximum impact on reducing teachers' workload. The Toolkit and the National Agreement can also be accessed through the Cutting Burdens website.

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*For further details from the school contact: Mrs Collins Tel: 0208 398 1310*

## Beacon Community College, Crowborough, East Sussex

### Use of teacher cover centres

Beacon Community College is a 11–18 foundation school of over 1,600 students and also provides a wide range of courses and other activities for the local community.

#### Problem

The college has sought to reduce the bureaucratic burden on teachers in a number of ways. This has included moving some traditional senior teacher tasks (e.g. examinations administration, personnel work and cover for absence) into the college office, and a general policy of enhancing the role of support staff and exploiting their skills within the college.

One burden the college was keen to address was the extent of the demands on teachers to cover for absent colleagues. While not a bureaucratic burden as such, cover makes significant inroads into non-contact time and therefore into available preparation and marking time and the ability of teachers to carry out necessary administration connected with their subject or pastoral responsibilities.

#### Solution

The solution was the establishment of 'learn centres'. These centres are fully equipped computer suites each with sufficient workstations for a class of 30 students. In the event of a teacher absence, the whole class group for the relevant period reports to the learn centre. Here, under the supervision of a support staff assistant and an ICT technician, they undertake individual study (either work set in advance or private study periods) using the PC and the college's intranet of learning resources. A senior member of staff provides overall supervision and assistance to the support staff supervisors when necessary.

#### Benefits

As a result of making this provision there has been a marked decline in the amount of cover being undertaken by the majority of teachers. The average reduction in cover duty is of the order of 50 per cent with consequent savings in staff preparation time and in the amount of time spent marking work set when a teacher is absent. There have also been gains in the motivation of students and the quality of learning as compared with conventional cover arrangements.

The learn centres are also now used for before-school literacy sessions for those students who are 18 months or more behind their chronological age on reading/spelling. These sessions have shown significant gains – as much as two years on a five week course.

The computer suites, which are partly financed from savings in the supply budget and partly from private sector sponsorship, are also used for timetabled ICT lessons, homework and, in

the evening, adult and other business and community use. As a result, Beacon has been able to generate further funding from bids to organisations as varied as the Prince's Trust and the Department for Trade and Industry.

### **Wider application**

This approach to the management of learning when teachers are unavoidably absent is particularly appropriate to a large secondary school which has invested heavily in ICT and where computer-aided learning is routine for most students.

### **Further developments**

The effective use of support staff to free teachers to teach – including reducing the hours teachers are required to cover for absent colleagues, as demonstrated by this example from Beacon Community College – is at the heart of the Government's proposals for reform detailed in the National Agreement of January 2003. The leaflet 'Developing the role of school support staff' contains a summary of the agreed reforms concentrating specifically on the benefits to support staff. This is available on the TeacherNet website at – [www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/remodelling/aprilpackage/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/remodelling/aprilpackage/).

ICT support is available for schools through the Department's Managed Services Initiative. The Department has approved a number of suppliers to provide, install and service ICT equipment in schools at a reasonable rate. For more information and a list of suppliers in your area, visit the NGfL website (<http://managedservices.ngfl.gov.uk>).

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*For further details from the school contact: [ab@beacon.e-sussex.sch.uk](mailto:ab@beacon.e-sussex.sch.uk)*

Further information

Visit our website at [www.dfes.gov.uk/cuttingburdens](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/cuttingburdens)

Department for Education and Skills  
School Workforce Unit  
Caxton House  
Tothill Street  
London SW1H 9NA

email: [cutting.burdens@dfes.gov.uk](mailto:cutting.burdens@dfes.gov.uk)

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