

**CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF
DINAS A SIR CAERDYDD**

Employment Conditions Committee: 24 November 2004

Report of Chief Executive

A REVIEW OF THE PROVISION OF CLASSROOM SUPPORT STAFF

Background

1. Since 1998 schools in Cardiff have experienced an unprecedented amount of reform to raise standards of pupil performance. In order to meet the challenges presented, schools have chosen to employ increasing numbers of staff, to support the delivery of quality teaching and a modern curriculum.
2. The National Agreement- *Raising Standards-Tackling Workload*- presents new challenges to the way that many support staff in schools are deployed, supervised and managed. The National Joint Council has recently issued guidance together with model Job Profiles to Local Authorities with a view to encouraging them to work with schools to develop local strategies in order to address the changes in roles and responsibilities of support staff as a result of the workload agreement.
3. The Schools Service, supported by Human Resources (Schools) has been reviewing the provision of Classroom Support Staff and draft proposals were first presented and discussed with schools and trade unions in June 2002. The proposals were further amended to take account of the NJC Job Profiles, and subjected to further consultation. This review now needs to be concluded, taking into account the issues raised by the workload agreement.
4. The purpose of this report, therefore, is to identify and address the issues determining the effective use of Classroom Support Staff, draw up guidance for schools and commend this guidance to school Governing Bodies and in particular, to the Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided Schools as the employers of these staff.

Issues

5. The categories of staff covered by this review can be described as providing support to, and working under the direction of, teachers, in primary, secondary and special schools, whether this involves working with a group of pupils, or individuals, with or without special needs, inside the classroom or elsewhere.
6. There are currently 1,063 classroom support staff employed within Cardiff schools and a number of job titles are currently used to describe them, including Adult Helper, Teachers Aide, Learning Support Assistant, Bilingual Assistant, and Nursery Nurse. It is difficult, in some instances, to distinguish between the job titles and roles.
 - The main aim of all the roles under review is to support learning, and in this context the title of Adult Helper is no longer appropriate.

- The term Nursery Nurse is inappropriate for the role now fulfilled by Nursery Nurses.
 - The term 'Teaching Assistant' is the Department for Education and Skills' preferred title for the staff covered by this review.
 - The National Occupational Standards refer to Teaching or Classroom Assistants.
7. At present there exists a varied pay structure with no salary progression for Adult Helpers and limited salary increases for Teachers Aides, Bilingual Assistants, Learning Support Assistants and Nursery Nurses. The current grades and standard working weeks are:
- Adult Helper - manual grade MGD4, paid hourly in term-time plus half pay retainer in school holidays, based on a 37 hour working week which excludes Inset Days.
 - Teachers Aide/Learning Support Assistant - NJC points 4 to 6 (a small number of employees rising to points 7 or 8 for signing, Braille or EAL skills) and no recognised link to specified qualifications, based on a 30 hour week which excludes Inset Days.
 - Nursery Nurse - NJC points 6-15, (with one or two employees on just above if they have the advanced NNEB Diploma); linked to some specified qualifications and normally carrying higher levels of responsibility, based on a 32.5 hour week which includes Inset Days. A Cardiff County Council approved policy stipulates a quota of 1 nursery nurse per 13 pupils in a nursery class setting.
 - Minimum salary points apply if the employee is aged 21 or over, with the exception of Adult Helpers.
8. This situation has caused problems in terms of recruitment and retention of staff and discourages them from studying for nationally recognised and relevant qualifications. Access to appropriate Inset training and the support offered in terms of their work performance and personal development is an issue.
9. There are a number of different job descriptions and person specifications in use which vary in content and structure and are not consistent in terms of the requirements for the post.
- Core job descriptions identify the essential areas of responsibility of the job, they can be added to (within the reasonable bounds of the job) by schools, to meet their individual needs, but with no elements of the core job description being taken away.
 - Core job descriptions also help to ensure consistency of grades, identify staffing needs, determine correct grades for new posts, aid recruitment and selection, ensure staff understand what is expected of them and are a vital tool in the management of staff performance.
 - Core person specifications setting the essential qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience needed for the post support consistency of approach and allow the

identification of training needs. They are essential tools in the recruitment and selection process.

10. Clear performance and line management arrangements are important elements in supporting the work performance and personal development of all staff. Schools are advised to establish clear performance and line management arrangements for their Classroom Support staff.
11. Appropriate training and development of staff is needed to underpin the proposals contained in this report and the following will need to be considered:
 - a. Identifying and meeting individual training needs.
 - b. Identification of core training programmes for all staff, including induction, and how these can be best organised.
 - c. On the job training and development supported by the line manager and the school.
 - d. Access to and funding for the acquisition of relevant qualifications.
 - e. Clarifying the responsibilities of managers and staff for training and development issues.
 - f. Arrangements for providing cover when appropriate to support the release of staff to attend training, including investigating the possibility of establishing a central supply of staff.
12. The financial implications arising from these proposals have been calculated to be:

First Year	Primary Delegated Budgets £	Secondary Delegated Budgets £	Special Delegated Budgets £	Retained Budgets £	Total Cost £
Nursery Nurses	89,519	0	13,796	10,691	114,006
Teachers Aides	481,763	133,618	97,318	51,144	763,841
Adult Helpers	28,411	5,928	1,371	0	35,710
Total	599,693	139,545	112,485	61,835	913,558

- Should the proposals be implemented from January 2005 the 3 months cost would be £228,389

Maximum Costs	Primary Delegated Budgets £	Secondary Delegated Budgets £	Special Delegated Budgets £	Retained Budgets £	Total Cost £
Nursery Nurses	721,564	0	124,088	104,786	950,438
Teachers Aides	481,783	133,618	97,318	51,144	763,841
Adult Helpers	47,068	9,820	2,271	0	59,159
Total	1,250,394	143,438	223,676	155,930	1,773,438

13. Whilst the additional costs of the staff currently employed by individual schools would be met from their delegated school budgets, the additional costs of those staff employed by the Schools Service would be met from centrally retained budgets. In 2004-2005 these budgets have been increased by a share of the additional revenue funding for the introduction of the Teachers Workload Agreement amounting to £238,000.
14. Any future increases in the costs of those staff employed by the Schools Service would be met from within current Schools Service retained budgets and in particular those budgets retained for the Pupil Support Services division of service.

Proposals

15. With effect from 1st January 2005 the proposals are to:
- i Redesignate all staff covered by this review as Teaching Assistants. The post title can be expanded to give a better description of a specialist role e.g. Teaching Assistant - EAL, Teaching Assistant - Special Needs, Teaching Assistant - Hearing Impaired, etc.
 - ii Remove the post of Adult Helper from the grading structure.
 - iii Implement four Teaching Assistant levels within two Teaching Assistant grades, all linked to identifiable levels of responsibility through job descriptions, person specifications and, where appropriate, specified qualifications. Each level will have clear criteria for progression, which will also be subject to the availability of a post on that level.
 - Teaching Assistant – Grade 1, salary points 6-13 with a Bar at Point 9.
 - Level 1 will encompass a broad range of responsibilities in support of learning with no essential formal qualifications for Points 6-9. All existing staff on Teacher's Aide Grade will transfer to Point 9.
 - At Level 2 staff will need formal qualifications as stated in the person specification and have the ability to fulfil an enhanced role, subject to the availability of a post at that level.

There will be one additional salary point available for specific qualifications such as Braille, EAL and Signing, where stated as an additional requirement for the post.

- Teaching Assistant – Grade 2, salary points 14-23 with a Bar at point 19. This grade has a broad range of responsibilities in support of learning and has a higher level of responsibility than Grade 1 with the necessary essential qualifications contained in the person specification and have the ability to fulfil an enhanced role.
 - At Level 3 the salary range will be points 14-19.
 - Level 4 will have a range of 20 – 23 with progression subject to defined criteria and the availability of a post at that level.

There will be one additional salary point available for specific qualifications such as Braille, EAL and Signing, where stated as an additional requirement for the post.

- iv That training and development of Teaching Assistants is provided by the Schools Service which
 - 1. meets individual training needs.
 - 2. links to relevant qualifications, where applicable.
 - 3. reflects the core job descriptions and person specifications.
- v Training and development opportunities will be detailed in the Schools Service unified training programme for learning. This support will feature as a section in the Inset programme or schools will be notified directly.
- vi Commend to schools core job descriptions and person specifications for the proposed grades, adding detail (within the reasonable bounds of the job) in accordance with the school's individual needs.
- vii Increase the standard full time working week for the proposed Teaching Assistant Grades from 30 to 32.5 hours per week, thereby standardising the full time weekly hours of all Teaching Assistants.
- viii Require all staff who will be assimilated into the proposed Teaching Assistant Grades to be available for work, as appropriate, for the five Inset days per annum, making the standard working year 195 days.
- ix Pay the Special Schools Allowance of £393 per annum for Teaching Assistant Grade 1 and £1017 per annum for Teaching Assistant Grade 2, with pro rata payments for part time staff.
- x Increase Special Schools Allowance for Teaching Assistant Grade 1, each year by the same percentage as that of Teaching Assistant Grade 2, which is paid in accordance with NJC Conditions.
- xi Abolish the age criteria currently used to determine appointment salaries.

The current grades and the above proposals are summarised in Appendix 1.

Investment for Reform/ Benefit to service user

16. The proposals provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities of Teaching Assistants in schools and will help staff, governors and parents understand the contribution that such staff make to teaching and learning. The establishment of a career structure with support for training and development will help retain quality staff to the service and help future recruitment processes. These proposals will provide governing bodies with clear advice and guidance which will ensure that the Council fulfils its responsibilities determined by the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Council Policies Supported

17. This report supports the Council's commitment to having clearly defined job descriptions in established grades in line with the recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure which has been commended to school governing bodies.

Advice

18. This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Corporate Directors and reflects their advice. It contains all the information necessary to allow Members to arrive at a reasonable view, taking into account the following advice.

Legal Implications

19. The terms and conditions of existing staff cannot be changed without their consent unless their contracts are terminated first which would give rise to certain rights and remedies. However, it is understood that staff would consent to the proposed changes. All decisions taken by or on behalf the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers of behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. standing orders and financial regulations; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

20. The report identifies the cost of these proposals in the first year as £913,558 with a full year maximum cost of £1,773,438.
21. The first year costs amount to £851,723 to be met from existing delegated school budgets and £61,835 from the Schools Service central budget. If these changes are introduced from the 1 January 2005 then the costs in 2004/05 will be £212,930 and £15,459.
22. Within the revenue budget settlement for 2004-2005 the schools service were allocated a sum of £3,150,000 to cover the initial cost implications for schools of the Teachers Workload Agreement. Whilst £2.912 Million has been distributed to schools as part of their delegated formula budget a sum of £238,000 has been retained centrally.

23. The cost of these proposals will be met from the Workload Agreement monies allocated to the schools and Schools Service.

Human Resources Implications

24. This report proposes fundamental changes to the terms and conditions of Adult Helpers, Learning Support Assistants, Bilingual Assistants and Teachers' Aides and a regrading for Nursery Nurses.
25. These changes need to be introduced in a structured and sympathetic manner.
- All staff will be required to attend Inset Days.
 - Full time staff will be required to work an additional 2.5 hours per week.
 - New contracts of employment must be issued to those affected and support offered to those staff who are unable to work the increased hours.
 - New job descriptions and person specifications must be agreed and issued to all staff.
 - Evidence of qualifications will need to be obtained in order to assess progress beyond the bar points and entitlement to the additional point for specific qualifications.

Trade Union Comments

26. Trade Unions (teaching and support staff) and schools were fully consulted in June 2002 on the original proposals, and a number of modifications were made to take account of the responses.
27. The proposals contained in this report have been subject to further consultation and have been broadly welcomed the support/recognition for support staff in schools. Concerns have been expressed about the proposed job titles, particularly by those trade unions representing Nursery Nurses, and other options have been considered. The term 'Teaching Assistant' is the preferred term of the Department for Education and Skills, and is also the term used in the NJC National Job Profiles.

Recommendations

It is recommended that with effect from 1st January 2005:

- (i) All staff covered by this review be redesignated as Teaching Assistants. The post title be expanded to give a better description of a specialist role e.g. Teaching Assistant – EAL, Teaching Assistant – Special Needs, Teaching Assistant - Hearing Impaired, etc.
- (ii) The posts of Adult Helper be removed from the grading structure.
- (iii) The four Teaching Assistant levels within two Teaching Assistant grades be implemented. These to be linked to identifiable levels of responsibility through job descriptions, person specifications and, where appropriate,

specified qualifications. Each grade to have two levels with clear criteria for progression.

- Teaching Assistant – Grade 1, salary points 6-13 with a Bar at Point 9.
 - Level 1 to encompass a broad range of responsibilities in support of learning with no essential formal qualifications for Points 6-9. All existing staff on Teacher's Aide Grade will transfer to Point 9.
 - At Level 2 staff will need formal qualifications as stated in the person specification and have the ability to fulfil an enhanced role, subject to the availability of a post at that level.

There will be one additional salary point available for specific qualifications such as Braille, EAL and Signing, where stated as an additional requirement for the post.

- Teaching Assistant – Grade 2, salary points 14-23 with a Bar at point 19. This grade has a broad range of responsibilities in support of learning and has a higher level of responsibility than Grade 1 with the necessary essential qualifications contained in the person specification and have the ability to fulfil an enhanced role.
 - At Level 3 the salary range will be points 14-19.
 - Level 4 will have a range of 20 – 23 with progression subject to defined criteria and the availability of a post at that level.

There will be one additional salary point available for specific qualifications such as Braille, EAL and Signing, where stated as an additional requirement for the post.

- (iv) Core job descriptions and person specifications for the proposed grades be commended to school governing bodies, with schools adding detail (within the reasonable bounds of the job) in accordance with the school's individual needs.
- (v) The standard full time working week for the proposed Teaching Assistant Grades be increased from 30 to 32.5 hours per week, thereby standardising the full time weekly hours of all Teaching Assistants.
- (vi) All staff who will be assimilated into the proposed Teaching Assistant Grades be required to be available for work, as appropriate, for the five Inset days per annum, making the standard working year 195 days.
- (vii) The Special Schools Allowance of £393 per annum for Teaching Assistant Grade 1 and £1017 per annum for Teaching Assistant Grade 2, be paid, with pro rata payments for part time staff.
- (viii) The Special Schools Allowance for Teaching Assistant Grade 1 be increased each year by the same percentage as that of Teaching Assistant Grade 2, which is paid in accordance with NJC Conditions.
- (ix) The age criteria currently used to determine appointment salaries be abolished.

- (x) That Job Descriptions and Person Specifications are issued to staff when grades are confirmed.
- (xi) That updated Terms and Conditions are issued to staff when all of the proposed changes are introduced.

BYRON DAVIES
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

16 November 2004

The following Appendix is attached:

Appendix 1 Summary of Proposals

Background Papers:

Core Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

CLASSROOM SUPPORT STAFF – SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

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