

This chapter focuses on:

- 1.1 The type of adult support you might receive in the classroom;
- 1.2 A range of ways in which you can work with others in the classroom;
- 1.3 How to brief adults about their role before the lesson;
- 1.4 How to manage the work of other adults;
- 1.5 Working with children with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

1.1 WHAT ADULT SUPPORT MIGHT I EXPECT?



Reading - mathematics

The *Framework for teaching mathematics: from Reception to Year 6* gives sound advice on using adult helpers effectively on pp24–25.

In *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*, the term 'practitioners' refers to all adults working in the classroom. Read the teaching section on pp71–73 and the Stepping Stones column headed 'What does the practitioner need to do?' You will need to bear these points in mind when planning the work of your helpers and when briefing them.

You will encounter various adults working in classrooms. Some may be parent volunteers, whereas others could be experienced classroom or special needs assistants or qualified nursery nurses. Where the other adult has good experience and has been working with the class for some time, it is prudent to draw on their knowledge of the children and of classroom activities. Remember, though, that however good your helpers are, it is your responsibility to direct and manage the learning process.

Specialist Support Teachers can provide support for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and for children for whom English is an additional language (EAL). Teaching assistants can give support to those children who have fallen behind or who are more able. Nursery assistants are often employed to provide support in Reception classes, particularly with children aged under five. Volunteer parents can also provide invaluable support. It is important that your timetable notes when support is available.

1.2 HOW CAN I USE OTHER ADULTS EFFECTIVELY IN ALL STAGES OF A LESSON?

Other adult helpers can provide valuable support at all stages of the lesson, whether children are organised as a whole class, in groups, pairs or as individuals.

While you are **teaching the whole class**, another adult can be with an individual child to interpret and respond to questions, encourage and help them to give answers and explanations and check their understanding.



Reading - mathematics

To find out more about the role of teaching assistants you could read: *Induction Training for Teaching Assistants – Literacy Module* (DfEE 0130/2000), Course Documents L2.1-2.5

www.bcs.org.uk/educat/schools/adlthelp.htm

Teaching Assistants good practice guide:

www.dfes.gov.uk/a-z/TEACHING%5FASSISTANTS.html

During whole-class sessions, other adults might support children with SEN or children who speak English as an additional language. The time of other adults is wasted if they are merely sitting and listening to you. Unless you specifically want them to observe a particular teaching strategy or approach, they could contribute to assessment by monitoring the responses of one or more children against pre-selected targets or objectives.

When you are **teaching the class in smaller units**, another adult could support a group, a pair of children or an individual. It is important that you brief them carefully about the activity, making clear the desired learning outcomes and what you want the adult to do. Be aware that experienced adults may be familiar with the activity but might not understand how to use it to develop and extend children's knowledge, skills and understanding.

The British Computer Society produces free guidance on using adult helpers. The ideas relate to ICT but can be applied to other curriculum areas.

1.3 HOW CAN I BE SURE THAT OTHER ADULTS DO WHAT I WANT THEM TO DO IN THE LESSON?

Planning the work of other adults

Planning, briefing, monitoring and evaluating are key elements in managing other adults. If you have regular helpers, try to find support time at the planning stage to discuss your ideas for the next lesson. This will help them to understand the objectives that you want the children to achieve and it will help you to assess their level of expertise. Experienced practitioners, who know the children well, may be able to make a useful contribution at this stage and should be involved in medium- and short-term planning.

1.4 MANAGING THE WORK OF OTHER ADULTS

School policies

It is important that other adults in the classroom are given copies of school policies. These might include:

- Health and safety;
- Adult helpers in the classroom;
- ICT policy;
- Managing behaviour.

Briefly before the lesson

Provide clear direction by **briefing** your adult helpers before the lesson. Make sure they are clear about:

- issues of confidentiality;
- how they should be introduced and how they will be addressed by the pupils;
- how they will know the children's names – name cards, badges etc.;
- what their role and responsibilities will be and that you will explain these to the pupils at the beginning of the session;

- whether they understand the classroom rules and how they should apply them;
- location of resources – what can be accessed by pupils;
- when you will meet to discuss the objectives of the lesson;
- the type of information you will find valuable in relation to the tasks the children do and how best this can be recorded.

It is good practice to provide each helper with a written summary of the brief. This can simply state the activity, the mathematical objective or target and a list of children (noting any with particular needs). Leave a space for them to add notes at the end of the lesson on the children's response and achievement. If you are employed at short notice, an oral briefing will suffice, but remember to ask for feedback at the end of the lesson.

I.5 HOW SHOULD I MONITOR THE WORK OF OTHER ADULTS IN THE CLASSROOM?

Should other adults work with children with Special Educational Needs?

It is important that children with SEN benefit from the additional support that another adult in the classroom might give. However, it is vital that any adult working with child with SEN is aware of any special requirements that child may have. You may decide to share the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) with the adult working alongside you. You should consider the following:

- discuss the use of specific equipment, eg. concept keyboard, tracker ball, touch screen;
- where equipment is sited and how children access it;
- how the seating arrangements may differ from group to group eg. a partially sighted or partially deaf child will need to be seated at the front;
- which child may need to work at different speeds;
- identify any children who may need physical help with controlling some equipment, eg. a mouse;
- discuss different approaches to learning, eg. some children learn better visually, others may need a lot of repetition, the importance of eye contact, signing etc.

You need to **monitor** the work of adults who support. During the lesson, position yourself so that you can observe the helper and find time to check whether things are going according to plan. Be prepared to intervene if necessary, perhaps by modelling the kind of support you want them to provide, but be sensitive about this and do not undermine their efforts and confidence by taking over. Discussion of their verbal and written feedback and looking at children's work will help you to **evaluate** their effectiveness. Discuss their contribution towards achieving the mathematics objectives and suggest, if necessary, how they can improve the support they offer. Consider also whether you need to improve the briefing you give them or whether it would be more productive for them to work in a different way.

ADULT SUPPORT IN THE CLASSROOM

Do	Don't
Explain to the children at the outset of the task what they are going to do, how long they will be doing it, working arrangements and the expected outcome.	Let the children loose on the resources, eg. a computer without clearly defining the parameters of the task. It is likely that chaos will ensue if group organisation is not explained.
Encourage the children to try the task themselves.	Always demonstrate how to do the task.
Encourage children to problem solve by working together.	Tell them not to help each other.
See mistakes as a necessary part of the learning process.	Criticise children when they get it wrong.
Be flexible on time taken to complete a task (within reason).	Allocate the same amount of time spent on a task to every child.
Encourage children to ask and answer questions. Find the answers together.	Be worried if you don't know an answer.
Intervene if the group is clearly stuck.	Intervene if the group is involved in a problem-solving discussion.
Stress the need for all children to participate. Organise the group in a way that ensures all children have a role to play, eg. turn taking.	Leave it to the children to decide on the roles each will play unless this is a specific objective of the task.
Listen to the children's ideas. Ask questions that might take their thinking further, eg. <i>Why do you think that?</i> <i>What will happen if...?</i> <i>How do you know?</i>	Tell them the answers or answer their questions, eg. <i>If you do it that way you won't find....</i> <i>There is no point in trying to....</i> <i>You need to change....</i>
Ensure dominant children don't take control. It is important to do this without damaging their self-esteem. A good idea is to pre-empt their answer by saying something like <i>'I know you know the answer to this so I am going to ask someone else'</i> .	Tell dominant children to be quiet or to stop being so enthusiastic – often demonstrated by jumping up and down or waving their hand.
Ensure withdrawn or quiet children are not ignored. Target questions to individual children so that all children are involved.	Ask random questions that the same few children answer.
Praise success. There will be opportunities to do this with each individual even though the class may be mixed ability, eg. working through a task, concentration, presentation, completing the task as well as obtaining correct answers.	Criticise failure. Remember children often learn by making mistakes.
Compare an individual's work with what they have achieved previously. Stress the progress they are making, eg. <i>'This is presented much better than you did it last week. Is this because you have learned how to....?'</i>	Compare children's responses with each other. Avoid statements such as <i>'Look at Jon's work; he has done this much better than you!'</i>
Ask the teacher for help if you are stuck.	Be embarrassed if you don't know an answer.