

HIGHER LEVEL TEACHING ASSISTANTS

South Gloucestershire has been at the forefront in engaging Teaching Assistants to go forward to take up this opportunity to raise their status to this higher level. The assessment is rigorous and involves TAs in preparing focussed tasks and analysis. They are prepared and assessed for this by an approved organisation, we have been working with Best Practice Network who have worked largely to our dates and venues so that it has been convenient for our Teaching Assistants to access.



Diane, Chris, Kim, Jane and Gerry were among the first to achieve this and are working in roles in their schools that reflect recent changes and their skills in adapting to this. We have 61 Teaching Assistants who have been assessed at Higher Level and so far we can boast 100% success rate. The fifth cohort of 15 TAs have just had their two days preparation and will

be planning for assessment in December/ January. Sarah and I try to keep in touch with the groups to offer support and encouragement and we are already recruiting for Cohort 6 in the Spring. I think this is indicative of the high quality of our Teaching Assistants in South Gloucestershire and the support they receive from staff to gain qualification and have opportunities to develop within school. Thank you for your continued support.

What next for HLTAs?

The Assessor Award

Higher Level Teaching Assistants have the opportunity with the introduction of the Assessors Award to contribute to support staff training in school while continuing their own development. With this award they can assess others for the Support Work in Schools VQ at Level 2 and begin the process of self improvement for other members of staff. The Support Work in School VQ can start the process and raise the confidence of members in the workforce who might otherwise be reluctant to follow the conventional routes of centre-based training. They can gain a qualification for the work that they do, and hopefully in the process reflect on their good practice and improve!

The Foundation Degree

A Foundation Degree at City of Bristol College has existed for some time for Early Years Specialists. We have been working for the last year or so with UWE Education Faculty to develop a Foundation Degree which would specifically recognise the competences of the HLTA. The degree was approved by the submission panel in July 2005 and the first cohort will start in January 2006. Initially, there will be 15 places for us to fill with Bristol. The modular programme has been set for Wednesday afternoons and evenings over two years it can lead to an Honours degree and the PGCE for Primary Teaching.

Teaching Assistants wishing to pursue a career in Secondary Teaching would still need a main subject at Degree Level. This is currently being considered to establish a next step in their career development opportunities.

