

CLUSTER GROUPS

This has been an important link in the chain to give schools on-going support but also to engage new people in accessing training. Clusters give the opportunity to locate training and development in the community and enable networks of support to develop.

Teaching Assistants

This is a clearly defined group for whom we have built up a good programme of Continuing Professional Development over the last 6 or 7 years. The purpose of these clusters is to engage more people in the opportunity to meet regularly for support with Teaching Assistants from other schools, to foster a climate for development and perhaps a desire to seek further training opportunities.



Each cluster will develop to meet a different set of needs. Some have focussed on sharing resources, others have invited guest speakers into the group to talk about various aspects relevant to their work. Marion Dumbell gave an inspiring hour on resources for dyslexia to Cluster 1 while the small schools cluster focussed on sharing resources to support spelling needs

Certificate for Teaching Assistants

This is delivered through CPD and for the last five years has been offered at no cost to schools. This year we have recruited 60 Teaching Assistants on three different courses. Sarah Jones runs the mandatory Unit 1 and Unit 3 Teaching and Learning while Angela Feltham facilitates Unit 2 for Supporting Individuals with particular learning needs. This enables Teaching Assistants to gain a level 3 qualification.



Each unit has an assignment to be completed and all Teaching Assistants are offered tutorial support to achieve. Our achievement rate is high and the courses are very popular.

Future Developments

There is a need to draw together staff from the administration and secretarial groups in school. The purpose of these forums would be similar, to share good practice and to define training needs. It is planned to start these groups in the New Year. There are some opportunities at the moment, through the CPD programme to take part in the more generic areas of training. Effective Listening, Effective Communication has been attended by support staff and found to be very useful. Many members of support staff have also attended Child Protection, Drugs Awareness and First Aid, both by application to CPD and also as whole school training.