

Recommendations from research

A suggestion for implementing the strategy 'Review and refine the TA's role and responsibilities' from the Guide: [Teacher aide practice](#)

Includes:

- Research findings
- Leadership supports
- Best impact on learner outcomes
- Effective systems and processes
- Useful resources

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From

Guide: [Supporting effective teacher aide practice](#)

Strategy: [Review and refine the TA's role and responsibilities](#)

Suggestion: [Recommendations from research](#)

Date

12 July 2026

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Research findings

Recommendations from the extensive research project [The Deployment and Impact of Support Staff](#), undertaken in United Kingdom schools:

- ✓ Teacher Aides (TAs) need to add value to what teachers do, not replace them.
- ✓ TAs can support students to develop independent learning skills.
- ✓ TAs need to be fully prepared for their role.
- ✓ TAs need on-going professional development in evidence-based interventions.
- ✓ TAs can deliver high quality, one-to-one and small group support, using structured interventions when they have been trained to do so.
- ✓ Explicit connections need to be made between learning from everyday classroom teaching and structured interventions (such as stand-alone reading, literacy, or numeracy programmes).
- ✓ Avoid expecting TAs to be an informal teaching resource for students requiring additional support.

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Leadership supports

According to a 2016 literature review, teacher aides are most effective when school leaders:

- ✓ consider teacher aides as part of the total school system that is focused on student achievement
- ✓ have management processes and systems in place to support them
- ✓ include teacher aides in the annual performance management cycle
- ✓ prioritise professional learning for school leaders and teachers on how to effectively manage and partner with teacher aides
- ✓ familiarise teacher aides with school policies and documents that clarify their role and responsibilities, and the procedures for accessing support if they need it
- ✓ encourage teachers to value the knowledge teacher aides have of (assigned) students
- ✓ provide regular, relevant professional learning for teacher aides to assist teachers to deliver the planned learning programme.

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Best impact on learner outcomes

"Well-structured interventions with reliable evidence of effectiveness" are recommended in the latest research.

The area of research showing the strongest evidence for teacher aides having a positive impact on pupil attainment focuses on their role in delivering structured interventions in one-to-one or small group settings.

Crucially, these positive effects are observed only when teacher aides work in structured settings with high-quality support and training. When teacher aides are used in more informal, unsupported, instructional roles, we see little or no impact on pupil outcomes.

Jonathan Sharples, Rob Webster, and Peter Blatchford

Source:

[Making best use of teaching assistants: Guidance report
https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/teaching-assistants](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/teaching-assistants)

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Effective systems and processes

Teacher aides are most effective when effective systems and processes are in place.

- ✓ Schools have a clear strategy about how and when teacher aides work with students.
- ✓ Teachers take responsibility working with groups and individuals, including those who need the most support.
- ✓ Teachers are prepared for their role as manager of other adults in the classroom.
- ✓ Teacher aides and teachers have allocated time to discuss planning and student progress.
- ✓ Teacher aides are provided with information about lesson content, their role in the lesson, the students they will work with, and expected outcomes. There is a mechanism for teacher aides to feedback information.
- ✓ Teacher aides are provided with regular professional learning opportunities.
- ✓ Teacher aides are regularly observed, given constructive feedback, and included in the performance management cycles.

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Useful resources



School support staff: Collectively making resources count

Read time: 179 min

This NZ report was commissioned by the Support Staff Working Group (SSWG). It includes seven case studies of schools that use effective management practices for their support staff.

Publisher: Educational Leaders

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