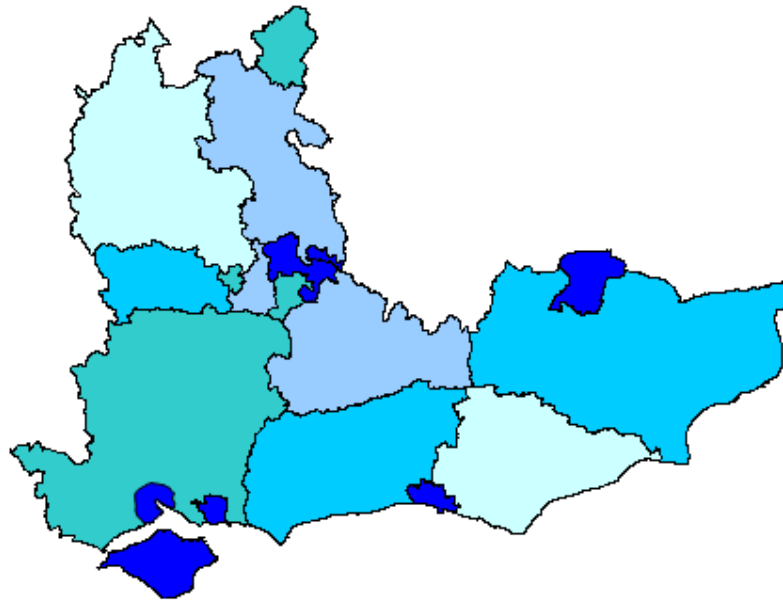


WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE



Understanding & Achieving Rarely Cover by Sept 2009

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Context

Schools across England and Wales are facing the challenge of implementing strategies in their schools so that teachers will rarely be required to cover for absent colleagues.

A group of Workforce Development Managers and Head teachers from the South East Region have prepared practical guidance to help schools achieve the “rarely cover” requirement, as set out in Section 4 of the Teacher’s Pay and Conditions Document 2008.

The guidance is the result of workshop sessions with a group of secondary, primary and special school head teachers and senior leaders and Workforce Development Managers.

Our thanks go to the following colleagues:

Local Authority Workforce Managers	School Leaders
Anne Hudson – Surrey County Council	Di Trainor, Headteacher, Salfords Primary School, Surrey
Chris Ayliffe – East Sussex County Council	Eddie Neighbour, Assistant Headteacher, Slough Grammar School
Fran Martin – Southampton City Council	Geoff Greatorex, Deputy Head at Bishop Luffa CE (Technology College)
Jackie Rees – Kent County Council	Karen Watling, Assistant Principal, Collingwood College
Michelle Punter – East Sussex County Council	Neil O’Boyle, Headteacher, Westbourne Primary School, West Sussex
Mike Walker – Kent County Council	Phil Karnavas, Headteacher, Canterbury High and Beauherne Junior School
Peter Quinn – Slough Borough Council	Remo Palladino, Headteacher, Southdowns Special School, East Sussex
Steve Crowther – West Sussex County Council	

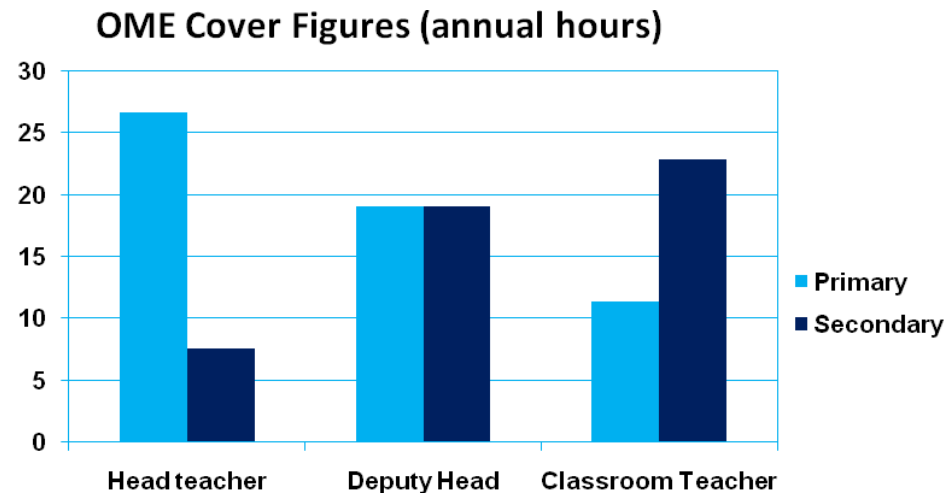




1. UNDERSTANDING RARELY COVER

Since the start of the national agreement, time for standards, your school will have been working towards reducing the hours of “cover” provided by teachers. In September 2009 schools will need to have plans in place so that teachers are rarely asked to cover for absent colleagues.

1.2 Hours of cover per year provided by teachers, deputy heads and headteachers in schools:



Source: OME School Teachers' Diary Survey 2008

1.3 What is the WAMG definition of rarely cover?

At the time of preparing this resource, the detailed definition of “rarely cover” is still under consultation with the social partners. The working group who prepared this guide have suggested some wording to describe “rarely cover”.

For example;

- Providing lesson cover in an emergency situation where without doing so, the health, safety and well-being of students and/or staff are at risk
- Exceptional absence of staff that cannot be pre-determined (outside the analysis of trends, e.g. staff absence)
- When all the school's strategies for providing cover for absent teachers has been exhausted (all Cover supervisor staff deployed, regular Cover teacher deployed and no agency supply teachers available)

2. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF WELL-PLANNED COVER STRATEGIES?

Stakeholder	Benefits
Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent approach from staff in terms of behaviour management • Staff are familiar with the ethos and routines of the school • Pupils are more likely to be in receipt of properly planned work during cover lessons • Properly planned work will contribute to pupil progress.
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate use of teachers' time • Reduction of teacher absence and turnover • Improved morale and work life balance • Enables teachers to use non-contact time in the way they have planned to use it
Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater variety of support staff roles in school • Improved career progression for support staff • Opportunities to train and move into teaching
School leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leaders have time to focus on leadership and management and strategic activity rather than stepping in to deliver cover • Head teachers have better opportunity of achieving their dedicated time • A proactive plan in place for cover management • Teachers are able to focus on their professional responsibilities • Reduction in time spent on crisis management
Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved monitoring of the content of planned work during cover lessons. • Planned work is more likely to link to the curriculum and programme of teaching and learning
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs of cover supervisor employment can be planned for in advance • Teacher supply costs reduced • Opportunity to remodel deployment of staff to increase lessons/per teacher and reduce direct supply costs, bearing in mind the no-detriment clause in the STPCD



3. STATUTORY POSITION



The starting point on any limits on cover for teachers are set out in paragraph 75.9.1 and 75.9.2 of the School Teachers Pay & Conditions Document 2008 (STPCD). The Statutory Guidance is in paragraphs 46-75:
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=12833>

The introduction of quotas on “rarely cover” will be covered by an amending order which is expected to be published in the near future. The order will be accompanied by revised statutory guidance. ‘Cover’ refers to any situations where the teacher normally responsible for teaching a particular class is absent from the classroom during the time he or she has been timetabled to teach.

Section 4, Para 50 pg 184 of the STPCD states:

“Schools should expect to implement the objective that teachers should only ‘rarely cover’ from 1st September 2009. In the meantime, schools should set their own interim targets, informed by the latest Office Manpower Economics (OME) data which serves as a benchmark, to ensure they are ready to meet the objective of teachers rarely covering from 1st September 2009”.

For support staff, the Regulations on specified work undertaken by support staff regarding planning, supporting, delivering and assessing teaching & learning can be found in Section 133 of the 2002 Education Act at <http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031663.htm>. The Guidance accompanying these Section 133 Regulations ‘Time for Standards’ can be found at:
http://www.tda.gov.uk/upload/resources/pdf/n/na_guidance_s133.pdf.



4. COVER STRATEGIES – WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

There is no nationally prescribed option. Schools will need to choose strategies that are best suited to their circumstances. However whatever strategies are selected, the aim must be to minimize the cover that teachers undertake in exceptional circumstances. The options available will vary depending on the size and phase of the school, although the objective is to achieve “rarely cover” and maintain high quality teaching and learning. This table is based on the WAMG 2004 Time for Standards Cover Strategies- Overview and Toolkit: <http://www.tda.gov.uk/remodelling/nationalagreement/cover/coverresourcepack.aspx>

Strategy	Guidance
<p>Cover supervision This strategy involves the deployment of support staff, with appropriate training and support from teaching colleagues, in a supervisory role to cover for staff absence. Support staff deployed to provide cover supervision may be wholly or mainly employed to provide cover supervision. Alternatively this strategy may involve the partial redeployment of support staff who also have a wider school role.</p>	<p>The deployment of cover supervision by appropriately trained support staff is in line with the aims and requirements of the National Agreement and provides continuity for pupils in the case of short-term absence. If cover supervision is deployed through the deployment of support staff whose principal role is not cover supervision there may be issues around disruption to existing responsibilities. This strategy does not deliver active teaching to pupils and so would be inappropriate for longer-term absence.</p>
<p>Learning centre A specially allocated physical space where pupils are moved when cover is required.</p>	<p>The use of a learning centre to provide cover for staff absence is in line with the aims and requirements of the National Agreement. The strategy is effective in providing continuity to pupils when deployed in the case of short-term absence. The permanent staffing of a learning centre would also mean minimal disruption for support staff. The start-up costs, including training costs, for a learning centre with ICT provision could be high and there would be ongoing maintenance costs, however, costs should fall following start-up.</p>
Strategies delivering specified work	
<p>Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) roles. Support staff may undertake specified work when the class teacher is absent for a short time. This must be done in accordance with the section 133 Regulations and Guidance issued under the Education Act 2002. In achieving HLTA status, teaching assistants have been assessed against the 33 standards for HLTA status.</p>	<p>This strategy provides a good level of continuity for the pupils, especially when the HLTA has been involved in the preparation and planning of the lesson, and is in line with the aims and requirements of the National Agreement. A cover policy which frequently involves the deployment of HLTAs away from their timetabled responsibilities could be disruptive and inconsistent with the important role of HLTAs.</p>
<p>Floating Teacher A school employs a qualified teacher with no timetable, or less than 50 per cent timetable, to meet cover requirements by teaching the class.</p>	<p>This allows the delivery of specified work to pupils. Continuity of pupils would also be good as they would be taught by a familiar member of staff. However contracting a floating teacher is not necessarily cost effective if in practice they are providing cover supervision only.</p>
<p>External Resources A school sources teacher cover either through an LA supply service, from a private agency or a private lists which might be shared with a small number of other schools.</p>	<p>This allows for the delivery of specified work. The OFSTED study of “Schools’ use of temporary teachers” (December 2002) provides helpful advise. Employing external supply teachers for short-term cover where only cover supervision is required may be less effective in terms of both continuity of pupils and cost.</p>
<p>Double or split classes The class joins another lesson or is divided amongst several lessons.</p>	<p>This strategy is not in line with the National Agreement. It constitutes cover hours for the receiving teacher. It is not recommended as a cover strategy</p>

Other strategies to consider

(These are not included in the WAMG “Cover Strategies – Overview and Toolkit)

- A cluster of schools employing a shared teacher on a permanent basis to use their specific curricular expertise
- Reorganising the timetable in advance in order to achieve different groupings e.g. when a large cohort such as a year group is involved in off site activities such as educational visits
- Using planned enrichment activities to reorganise staffing (eg in the planned absence of the class teacher a community artist works with the class alongside an HLTA). Schools need to consider the advice provided in WAMG note 22 about the deployment of HLTAs.
- In primary schools, allocating an HLTA to each class as a member of the teaching team. The HLTA delivers teaching and learning during PPA time and when ever short-term cover is required in that class.
- In a Secondary school, an HLTA deployed in a faculty or department may be deployed in a variety of roles including delivering teaching and learning in the event of planned or unplanned teacher absence.



5. DEVELOPING A POLICY ON COVER

It is good practice to develop a Policy on the provision of cover. The check list below is designed to assist you in developing a policy and it sets out some key points to consider. This is not an exhaustive list but is designed to assist you in reviewing your existing policy or developing your cover policy:



Key points	Summary	Included YES/NO
Context	Background information with specific reference to STC& PD	
Aims	What do you want to achieve from this policy eg raising standards and ensuring the quality of teaching and learning	
Definition of short term absence	Define short term absence which incorporates both planned and unplanned absence.	
Definition of long term absence	Define long term absence which incorporates both known long term absence (ie maternity) and unplanned long term absence (ie serious illness)	
Strategies for planned and unplanned absence	Outline the strategies and options which the school intends to use to address all absence.	
Roles & responsibilities	Identify key roles and responsibilities within the school ie cover manager	
Gained time	Incorporate the STP&CD (para 54 -56) guidance on gained time and examples of how this can be acquired and where it would be relevant to use gained time in regards to teaching and learning activities.	
Monitoring	Outline how the cover absence monitoring will be undertaken and ensure an impact assessment is incorporated.	
Policy review	Policy review date.	



6. EXAMPLE POLICY

Introduction

We are aware of the need to continue to reduce the amount of cover for absent teachers provided by our teaching staff to fulfil the objective that teachers should only ever rarely cover for absent colleagues. This policy has been developed in accordance with the conditions outlined in the school teachers' pay and conditions document 2008 and applies to all teaching staff in the school that are not wholly or mainly employed to provide cover. Our school is committed to introduction of the 'rarely cover' condition by September 2009.

Specific Conditions of Cover

- Our school recognises that providing cover is not an effective use of a teacher's time.
- Our school is committed to exhausting all other reasonable strategies for providing cover before having to ask a member of teaching staff.
- The school will maintain a record of cover undertaken by teachers to inform planning and monitor.
- The guaranteed PPA time of teachers at a school forms part of the legal conditions of employment so cannot and will not be used for cover.
- The OME Teachers' Workload Survey 2008 reports the following average levels of annual cover for teaching staff:

OME Cover Figures 2008 (annual hours)	Head teacher	Deputy Head	Classroom Teacher
Primary	26.6	19	11.4
Secondary	7.6	19	22.8
Special	-	-	19

Each member of teaching staff (other than those employed wholly or mainly to provide cover) has an interim cover target for the 08-09 academic year using the above figures as a guide but also mindful of the no detriment clause such that these targets will always be below the actual amount of cover undertaken by the teacher in previous years.

Where the need for cover is identified, we will deploy the following resources (delete as appropriate):

- Supply/cover teachers
- Cover supervisors
- HLTAs

The headteacher will take account of the following key factors when deciding to use cover supervision:

- The extent to which continuity of learning can be maintained;

- The length of time a particular group of pupils would be working without a teacher;
- The proportion of the total curriculum time affected in a specific subject area over the course of the term.

Where members of support staff are so deployed they will always do so under the direction of a qualified teacher and will be subject to the regulations made under section 133 of the 2002 Education Act and accompanying guidance.

Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

A member of the senior leadership team will monitor the effectiveness of these strategies for providing cover on a termly basis to ensure that the quality of supervision and student progress and behaviour are as required.

Policy Review

The Headteacher and School Governing Body will carry out a review of this policy on an annual basis. The review will be informed by termly monitoring reports.

¹ Para 53, Section 4, 2008 STPCD

7. ACTION PLAN AND TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION



	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
Policy	<p>Review best practice, existing guidance & support</p> <p>Audit of 'cover' – who, when, how?</p> <p>Develop school policy</p>	<p>Draft and consult on cover policy</p> <p>Develop or review of policy for Work Life Balance which includes references to how cover will be applied</p>	<p>Finalise cover policy</p>	<p>Monitor the content of the cover as fits with the planned work</p>	<p>Monitor impact of cover strategies on pupils</p>		<p>Review policy progress and impact</p>
Finance	<p>Audit of how cover is financed at present</p>	<p>Cost new strategies</p>	<p>Redirect monies</p> <p>Finalise budget</p>	<p>Measure cost/benefit strategies</p>			
Comms.	<p>Consult in school and wider community</p> <p>Raise governor awareness & support</p>	<p>Consult in school and wider community</p> <p>Consider a cluster approach to cover</p>	<p>Share good practice within confederations and clusters</p>	<p>Plan the communications about how cover is working</p>	<p>Discuss with School Improvement Partner</p>	<p>System for feedback on cover provision</p>	
Staffing	<p>Audit staff skills and consider development needs.</p> <p>Consider different structures to enable flexibility</p> <p>Establish change team for "rarely cover"</p> <p>Identify staff available for cover and review job descriptions</p>	<p>Communicate staffing changes to Governors and parents</p> <p>Advertise for cover staff where required</p> <p>Model effective cover</p> <p>Develop HLTAs to deliver learning instead of cover</p>	<p>Train cover supervisors</p>		<p>Evaluate staffing models</p>	<p>Communicate the cover strategies to all staff in school</p>	<p>Induct new staff ready for autumn</p>

8. CASE STUDIES

Salfords Primary School, Salfords, Surrey
Headteacher in post for 10 years
N.O.R. 300 ,PAN: 45, 11 classes
Mixed age classes throughout Key stage 1 and 2.
30% Special Needs, 10% EAL

CONTEXT

The Headteacher has always seen the role of teaching assistants to be a partnership with the class teachers in supporting pupils' learning. On arrival at Salfords in 1998, she found that in some of the classes the teaching assistant was more than happy to take a class for a short period of time during the day, so that a teacher could deal with a situation or attend a meeting. Others would take a class for a whole day rather than have a supply teacher. The Head immediately identified that there was a positive climate and took the opportunity to nurture and develop the role. For example all support staff have had performance management in place since 1999 and PPA time was already in place a year before it was statutory.

In support of this, teaching assistants are given high priority when planning CPD across the school. As a result every teaching assistant has a GCSE grade A-C or equivalent in Maths and English. Most have a NVQ qualification for teaching assistants. 3 have the HLTA status and one is an NVQ assessor. In Early years one T.A. has the 'Pre-school Foundation course' certificate.

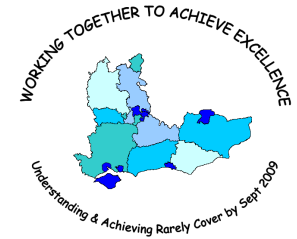
HLTAs and TAs are paid to plan for an hour a week. HLTAs are expected to attend the weekly staff meeting and the planning meeting. TAs plan either at the planning meeting or for short periods every day. In 2005 the revised teaching assistant Career Framework was used to re-write job profiles and create a pay structure that was agreed and transparent. Criteria for recruitment also included GCSE grade A–C or equivalent.

APPROACH TO COVER

At Salfords teachers are not used to cover for absent teachers. PPA and Management Time are timetabled and strictly adhered to. Planned absences are covered by HLTAs whenever possible. This is achieved as HLTAs are attached to each phase so that there is flexibility of movement from one class to another when cover is required. As HLTAs attend weekly planning meetings they are able to plan, deliver, mark and assess the learning in these lessons and so pupil progress is maintained.

If a teacher is off sick for more than a day or a teacher is attending a course that includes money for supply, then we always use our own pool of excellent supply teachers. If an agency is used we ask for teachers that we know are good. Emergency cover happens if a teacher is suddenly called away for a short period of time or if a teacher is ill and a supply teacher isn't available. This is covered by an HLTA. Occasionally, in extreme situations, a T.A. who has the skills and who has agreed to take the class in an emergency, will be asked. The T.A. is always the T.A. attached to the class or phase group.





MONITORING

Once a term the impact of this is monitored through

- The termly T.A. meeting
- The Senior Management Team
- The School Change team
- Half termly data meetings

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

This has had a positive impact on our budget as less money is spent on supply teachers.

BENEFITS

- Pupil outcomes have been maintained and in fact are rising
- All staff feel valued
- Skilled TAs and career progression
- Dedicated Headship and Management time achieved
- Reduced supply costs and staff sickness

CONCERNS

The Deputy Head has 3 management afternoons that are covered by the HLTA attached to her phase group. Very occasionally, if the HLTA is off sick, the Deputy will cover her own class for the first afternoon as it is impossible to get a supply to cover in the afternoon at such short notice. This will need to be monitored very closely to ensure that it meets the 'rarely' criteria.

NEXT STEPS

Review our Cover policy in light of the objective that teachers should only 'rarely cover' from 1st September 2009. Continue to monitor the Deputy Head's management afternoons.

WHY WE BELIEVE WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL

- Positive school climate towards the role of TAs and HLTAs
- Policy agreed by all stakeholders
- 1 hours paid planning time for TAs and HLTAs
- Quality CPD opportunities for TAs and HLTAs
- Transparent pay structure and job profiles for TAs and HLTAs
- TAs attend parents' evenings
- TAs are paid for any agreed overtime
- Monitoring of impact

Bishop Luffa School, Chichester, West Sussex
11-18 mixed comprehensive.
1385 pupils, 280 in the Sixth Form.
Eight form entry. Church of England,
Voluntary Aided Technology College.



CONTEXT

OFSTED October 2008 described the school as outstanding in every area. One of the reasons was the Workforce remodelling new staffing structure that has enlarged the work of the Study Supervisors and new Faculty Support Assistants.

January 2001: Average annual cover by teachers was 37. Absence rates were not excessive, but needed reducing i.e. 65 teachers out of a workforce of 73 had at least one days illness in 2000. 1521 periods (one hour length) were lost through illness. Of course the real figure is much higher due to internal events, trips, visits, rehearsals, House matches, invigilation of Art exams, orals etc etc.

APPROACH TO COVER

The school have developed a team of Study Supervisors to reduce staff absence and reliance on ad hoc Supply Teachers who did not know the school or students. Clearly we were still going to use Supply Teachers but only when an individual absence reached threshold, or a long term absence was known in advance and a specialist was required. The business plan had to take account of this.

In January 2001 I told the staff that in a couple of years this would be the norm, and there would be no going back – and I was right. Now staff entering the profession have no idea what it was like to lose the majority of your free periods to sit in a ‘foreign’ subject. Average cover by teachers 2007-8 was 8.3, down from 37+ in 2000. Target for 2008-9 is 6.0.

In 8 years we have been through about 20 Study Supervisors, but only 3 have left because they didn’t like the job. Five have gone on the either GTP or PGCE, 2 have moved to a similar position in another school closer to home. Some have moved out of the area.

Staff absences have steadily reduced: 64 teachers have been absent (now have 93 total) and periods lost down to 1424. But it is actually much better than this: now exam invigilation is done almost exclusively by non teachers. Exceptions being specialist areas such as art, music, orals, drama. Long term illnesses have been dramatically reduced, and there have been no instances of stress/anxiety related long term absences for three years.

Tasks have been realigned and further support staff introduced – Faculty Support Assistants. Tasks have moved from senior staff to a Senior Study Supervisor. Training has continued for SS and all have a minibuss permit, half are first aid trained. All this enables more teachers to stay in the classroom and we can send AOTs on trips etc.

South Downs Community Special School, Eastbourne, East Sussex
136 pupils with a very diverse range of Educational Special Needs
Two sites
60% of pupils autistic
25% have complex needs



CONTEXT

The school employs around 25 teachers and more than 60 teaching assistants. The total number of staff is just over 100. Of the teaching assistants around 20 are TA4s and there are 5 HLTAs. The average class size across the school is around 9 pupils per class and the typical staffing levels would be one teacher and up to four teaching assistants per class one of who would be a TA4.

APPROACH TO COVER

We have a number of internal structures to support cover in planned or unplanned circumstances. These structures are underpinned by the following principles:

- it is the staff with whom the pupils are familiar & will make the best contribution to the Childs achievements and attainment in any one session.
- That the relationship between the adult and child is fundamental to the progress a child makes whilst engaged in any activity in school.
- That our own staff have the essential knowledge and expertise in delivering a range of strategies matched to the needs of the child.
- That only our own staff have the depth of knowledge of the individual child required to affect a truly successful learning experience.

Given these principles the school:

- Never uses agency or other staff from outside of its own staff group.
- Has ensured that there is one HLTA attached to each site to deliver PPA, Management cover and some unplanned absence cover.
- Have ensured that there is one Teaching Assistant floating on both sites to cover teaching assistant absence.
- That each class has a Teaching Assistant level 4 to cover teaching absence of short periods e.g. up to 1 day. These staff are paid an additional amount for taking responsibility for classes on those days. In circumstances where this happen an additional Teaching Assistant is moved to the class.
- Therefore in the event of a teacher absence the class is taught either by an HLTA or by a TA4 for a short period. After that we have teaching staff available within our structure to cover longer absences.
- In the event of a teaching assistant absence we use the floating teaching assistant or re-deploy staff across the school to cover the absence.

Two years ago the supply budget for the school stood at £28000. Now there is no staff supply budget and the money is used to employ the two floating teaching assistants. We believe these structures maximise the opportunity of continuity of relationship in the child's daily learning experience and that this best facilitates progress over any one lesson or day.

9. USEFUL LINKS AND REFERENCES

The following reference sources will assist headteachers and governing bodies in setting the cover policy for the school.

Time for Standards: Remodelling Cover Resource Pack:

<http://www.tda.gov.uk/remodelling/nationalagreement/cover/coverresourcepack.aspx>

- Guidance for Schools on Cover Supervision. WAMG
- Time for Standards : School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document 2004
- Time for Standards : Cover Strategies – Good Practice
- Time for Standards : Cover Strategies – Overview & Toolkit
- Local examples of short term cover strategies

Other useful Documents and web links:

- STP&CD 2008 www.teachernet.gov.uk
- Specified Work Regulations <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031663.htm>
- Time for Standards – Guidance on ‘Specified Work’ http://www.tda.gov.uk/upload/resources/pdf/n/na_guidance_s133.pdf
- Guidance on the regulations: www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/remodelling/.
- School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document :www.teachernet.gov.uk/paydoc
- Role of Support Staff : [www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/teaching assistants/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/teaching_assistants/)
- www.teachernet.gov.uk/aprilpackage.
- Case studies : www.ccc.education.net/remodelling
- DfES video : ‘Working with Teaching Assistants in Primary Schools’ DfES/0114/2003

