

The purpose of this Blue Paper is to provide attendees at local authority workshops with an opportunity to see how the subjects discussed during the sessions were dealt with on the two separate dates. By reporting on the content of the two days side by side we intend to provide local authorities with an opportunity to compare and contrast. What follows is not intended to be a full report on the workshops but an overview of what was presented. It does not substitute for the experience of hearing first hand what is said and discussed.

Tracking the career progression of an AST

Michael Garside, Bradford

Michael keeps in touch with his ASTs and takes quality assurance seriously. He maintains records of ASTs in Bradford and has documented their details. As a result, he has produced detailed data on ASTs by phase, years in service and outcomes of lesson observations. It was clear that the higher performing ASTs are often those who have more recently come to the status.

Michael set up a small working group of ASTs to identify need and establish a way forward. He believes that CPD is needed to support ASTs who have been in post for some time and also plans to initiate quality assurance visits to all secondary ASTs in teaching and outreach.

Michael's plans for the future include:

- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of ASTs within schools (SMT role and inreach)
- Making further QA visits, particularly in the primary sector
- Circulating a questionnaire to establish CPD requirements
- Placing an alumni board on the website
- Clarifying messages regarding scales and progression at coordinators' meetings.

The majority of his ASTs in the secondary phase are in national challenge schools and therefore their deployment in outreach is limited. Michael has found from his documentation that ASTs in the secondary sector are more likely to stay in post. Primary ASTs are more likely to move on to leadership and deputy headship roles.

Some interesting questions came out of the discussion that followed:

- How many LAs keep records of CPD visits?
- How many LAs evaluate CPD visits?
- What have ASTs done to keep up to date?
- Do aspirant ASTs have a bigger picture as to where the status is going to take them?
- Would it be an advantage if ASTs observed each other both in the same subject areas and also cross phase?

Tracking and facilitating the career progression of ASTs

Sally Franceschi, East Sussex

Sally spent the first nine months in post as AST Coordinator visiting her ASTs, marketing the status and recruiting. She now has a maximum capacity of 35 ASTs in post and has a list of aspiring ASTs.

Sally has developed a process for ASTs which she believes is very important so that ASTs can develop in the right way.

Induction – begins prior to assessment with the sharing of expectations and context of the role. Sally meets new ASTs before their appointment with their line manager and head-teacher. Following successful outcome of AST assessment, they talk through local arrangements and accountabilities; processes and practices. She tries to cut paperwork by having an electronic system in place.

Line Management – Subject consultants manage groups of ASTs. For example, the secondary maths team lead on induction for maths, county and project issues. This is crucial to career progression.

Professional Development— Opportunities are provided for ASTs to develop leadership skills so that if ASTs remain in teaching posts they can still use their leadership skills.

Administration—Sally has a secretary who handles the administration side of the project for her, receiving the various forms from ASTs and schools, tracking the outreach activities, their impact and the directions of the ASTs as well as keeping profiles up to date.

In terms of moving on from their AST role, in East Sussex:

- 2 primary ASTs have become deputy heads
- 1 has taken up an internal SLT role
- In one particular school, a team of ASTs is being created to lead on teaching and learning

With the help of her subject consultants, Sally has got to know her ASTs really well. She believes in good communication and says that ASTs need to know where their LA is coming from. She has tried to broaden the outlook for opportunities for ASTs to involve cross-curricular activities and would like to develop further CPD for ASTs with their schools.

Sally says, "It is wonderful to see ASTs grow."

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The Impact of ASTs

Helen Pemberton, Leeds

Helen has been carrying out a study of the impact of ASTs in Leeds and was, therefore, in a good position to speak about the subject. However, she started by saying that capturing precisely the impact of ASTs is difficult as it is generally part of a broader picture. It is fairer to talk about the AST support being a significant contributory factor in impacting on improvements.

Many of you will have previously heard that Helen is very passionate about her ASTs and sets out to ensure that they are well used and that outreach is well managed. She documents everything on a spread sheet and initiates contracts with schools that receive ASTs' support.

Helen's hard data on the impact of ASTs was positive. Looking at one "gaining ground" school where in 2008 results showed 5A*-C grades in English and maths were 54.3% with English at 74.7% and maths at 59%. The following year, with the introduction of a maths AST, the maths results had risen by 9.1% to 68.1% while the English results were 71.7% and overall the results rose to 62.4%.

In order to establish some hard evidence of improvement, Helen does her own research using Fischer Family Trust data to identify departments that might welcome AST support and then to see where ASTs may have made an impact. Helen showed the group an example of data revealing that ASTs in both history and geography had made a real difference in the schools where they worked.

Helen draws up a contract with the schools where ASTs are deployed to clarify expectations and intended outcomes, so that both sides know what is expected of them.

In Leeds ASTs are deployed in outreach in half term blocks. Helen is now piloting a project where ASTs go back after 1 or 2 terms to ensure that their legacy is continuing and that the measures they put in place are still impacting on teaching and learning, backed up by Fischer Family Trust data.

The Impact of ASTs

Jasbir Mann and

Michel Laurent-Régisse, Leicester

Leicester is looking at a 25 year vision, "Investing in Children".

Jasbir and Michel believe that the way forward is to develop their ASTs to become future leaders. However, with a realistic pool of only 16 active ASTs, it became obvious that recruitment was necessary. Their schools' forum immediately agreed that the pool of ASTs should be increased to 50 and they are committed to priority recruitment in mathematics.

It is crucial that the ASTs make an impact and are seen to be a good investment so the longer term funding may be agreed.

Jasbir and Michel believe that a strategic deployment plan is key to success. A deployment group has been set up comprising school-based and local authority people. There are networks for maths, science and English – they decide where ASTs are deployed. ASTs have 38 days of AST time used as follows:

LA deployment: 24 days
AST Networks / CPD: 3.5 days
Clusters / local needs: 2.5 days
Subject specialism / new learning needs: 5 days

Leicester wanted to develop a culture of evaluation so a formal set of papers, designed by ASTs, are used.

1. Requests for Outreach
2. Initial Consultation for Outreach / Inreach Work
3. Evaluation / immediate and return visit.

To ensure that the evaluation strategy was understood by all parties, they worked with Professor Mark Hadfield from Wolverhampton University and put in place a system for evaluation based on Kirkpatrick's model. This was supported by a logic model to identify the desired outcomes, what changes in practice are needed and what will lead to these changes.

While it is early days to measure an impact of the work that they and their ASTs have been doing, ASTs are being encouraged to return to their deployment schools to see what has remained and what has sustained.

The next AST and ET Local Authority Workshops will be held on
25 March 2010 and 30 March 2010

The programme and registration details will be sent out in the new year.

For more information on AST and ET Local Authority Workshops please contact Pam French on 01372 384282.