

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Supporting The Class Teacher: The Role of the Classroom Assistant (Intermediate 2)

NUMBER D31C 11

COURSE

SUMMARY

This unit enables candidates to examine the role of the classroom assistant in the support of the class teacher and pupils within the learning and teaching environment. This unit also enables candidates to gain an understanding of the various roles of other professionals working within education and knowledge of current initiatives and guidelines relevant to Scottish educational settings.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Describe how to establish working relationships with teachers and other professionals within educational settings.
- 2 Describe the role of the classroom assistant in providing support within the learning and teaching environment.
- 3 Describe current initiatives and guidelines influencing the curriculum in relevant Scottish educational settings.
- 4 Describe how to support the teacher in promoting the development of pupils.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Access is at the discretion of the centre, however candidates would be expected to be working or undertaking a work experience placement within an educational setting.

CREDIT VALUE

1.5 Credit at Intermediate 2.

CORE SKILLS

Information on the automatic certification of any core skills in this unit is published in *Automatic Certification of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 1999).

Administrative Information

Superclass: GA

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National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Supporting The Class Teacher: The Role of the Classroom Assistant
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Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Describe how to establish working relationships with teachers and other professionals within educational settings.

Performance criteria

- a) The description of the role of the class teacher is accurate in relation to local and national guidelines.
- b) The description of the role of the classroom assistant is accurate in terms of local and national guidelines.
- c) The identification of the roles of a range of professionals involved in the educational setting activities is accurate.
- d) The identification of the responsibilities of other professionals within schools and local authorities is accurate in terms of managing the classroom assistant.
- e) The identification of the characteristics of an effective relationship with teachers and other professionals reflects an understanding of good practice in educational settings.

Evidence requirements

Please refer to *Evidence requirements for the unit* at the end of the Statement of Standards.

OUTCOME 2

Describe the role of the classroom assistant in providing support within the learning and teaching environment.

Performance criteria

- a) The description of qualities and skills required to support learning and teaching is relevant in terms of building positive relationships, individual needs and classroom ethos.
- b) The identification of contexts where support for learning and teaching is required is relevant in terms of class activity.
- c) The description of strategies to support pupils is relevant in terms of context, individual pupil needs and teacher direction.
- d) The demonstration of strategies to support pupils is relevant in terms of context, individual pupil needs and teacher direction.

Evidence requirements

Please refer to *Evidence requirements for the unit* at the end of the Statement of Standards.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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OUTCOME 3

Describe current initiatives and guidelines influencing the curriculum in relevant Scottish educational settings.

Performance criteria

- a) Identification of current educational and curriculum initiatives and guidelines is valid and relevant to the educational setting where the classroom assistant works.
- b) The description of implementation of current educational and curriculum initiatives and guidelines is appropriate in relation to the pupils the classroom assistant supports.
- c) The description of the range of curriculum areas is appropriate in relation to involvement of the classroom assistant and class activities.

Evidence requirements

Please refer to *Evidence requirements for the unit* at the end of the Statement of Standards.

OUTCOME 4

Describe how to support the teacher in promoting the development of pupils.

Performance criteria

- a) The description of how the classroom assistant can support pupils' language development is consistent with teacher guidance and individual needs.
- b) The description of how the classroom assistant can support pupils' numeracy development is consistent with teacher guidance and individual needs.
- c) The description of how the classroom assistant can support pupils in other areas of the curriculum is consistent with teacher guidance and individual needs.
- d) The identification of how the classroom assistant can contribute to reporting and recording of pupils' progress is accurate in terms of establishment policy and teacher guidance.
- e) The demonstration of support to pupils in areas of curriculum is in accordance with teacher guidance.

Evidence requirements

Please refer to *Evidence requirements for the unit* at the end of the Statement of Standards.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

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EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE UNIT

Outcome 1

Written and/or oral evidence to ensure coverage of all the performance criteria.

Outcome 2

- a) Written and/or oral evidence
- b) Written and/or oral evidence
- c) Written and/or oral evidence
- d) Evidence of actual performance to show candidates can use strategies under teacher direction, to support pupils in differing contexts, considering individual pupil needs. Performance also to be supported by candidate written evidence.

Outcome 3

Written and/or oral evidence to ensure coverage of all performance criteria.

Outcome 4

- a) Written and/or oral evidence
- b) Written and/or oral evidence
- c) Written and/or oral evidence
- d) Written and/or oral evidence
- e) Evidence of actual performance to show candidates can demonstrate support to pupils in areas of curriculum in accordance with teacher guidance. Performance should also be supported by candidate written evidence.

National Unit Specification: support notes

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This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 60 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

Outcome 1

Candidates should be given the opportunity to explore and clarify the role of the classroom assistant as defined by available documentation. Documentation should include Scottish Executive Education Department information on classroom assistants and Local Authority job descriptions or specifications. The specific role of the classroom assistant within an educational setting must also be explored as this may vary between settings. Time should be spent on clarifying the role of the classroom assistant as defined on a national, local authority and individual establishment basis. Candidates should recognise that there are several roles that the classroom assistant may be asked to perform within and outwith the classroom situations.

Candidates should also gain an understanding of the role of the class teacher. Candidates should be aware that the class teacher is responsible for the management and learning of pupils in the classroom and other parts of the school and that the role of the classroom assistant is to work under the direction and supervision of the class teacher.

Some key roles of the classroom assistant may involve:

- Supervision of pupils outwith the class situation
- Supervision and support of pupils while undertaking work set by the class teacher
- Preparation of classroom materials/activities under the direction of the class teacher
- Assisting pupils with personal care, eg. clothing, personal hygiene when appropriate.

Candidates should also identify a range of professionals that may work within an educational setting and gain an understanding of roles and how these professionals also support class teachers and pupils. These may include:

- Peripatetic Teachers
- Specialist Teachers
- Administration/Support Staff
- School Nurse, doctor
- Speech Therapists
- Educational Psychologists
- Support for Learning Assistant
- Bilingual Services Teacher
- Supply Teacher
- Guidance Teacher
- Nursery Nurse
- Traveller Support Services

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Consideration should also be given to other professionals within the school or local authority who may have a management role for the classroom assistant. It is likely that the class teacher will have responsibility for the allocation, direction and supervision of the classroom assistant but other professionals may have additional management responsibility in relation to job specification, staff development needs, performance reviews, feedback and discipline. The roles of the following professionals may be examined, where appropriate, to clarify management responsibility for the classroom assistant.

- Assistant Head Teacher
- Head Teacher
- Allocated mentor
- Depute Head Teacher
- Senior Teacher
- Authority representative/nominated officer for classroom assistants.

The possibility of the classroom assistant working with more than one class teacher should also be explored to establish management responsibility.

Candidates should also gain an understanding of the importance of fostering effective relationships. Characteristics of effective relationships should be examined, these could include:

- Positive attitudes
- Mutual respect
- Teamwork
- Co-operation
- Shared goals
- Effective communication
- Trust/confidentiality

Outcome 2

Candidates should focus on their role as a classroom assistant providing support to the class teacher specifically within the learning and teaching environment. The qualities and skills required of the classroom assistant should be explored in relation to building effective relationships with the class teacher and pupils. The individual teacher and pupil needs as well as the group requirements within the classroom should be explored.

The rules, boundaries, policies, procedures and underlying aims of the learning and teaching environment should be considered when identifying and describing appropriate qualities and skills.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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The following qualities and skills may be explored in relation to working or co-operating with the class teacher or pupils:

- Respect
- Warmth
- Empathy
- Genuineness
- Reliability
- Self awareness
- Responsiveness
- Patience
- Confidence
- Calmness
- Sense of humour
- Tolerance
- Perceptiveness
- Flexibility
- Willingness to learn
- Assertiveness
- Encouraging independence
- Willingness to accept criticism
- Non Judgemental
- Ability to give praise, encouragement and re-assurance
- Co-operation

The candidate should also be given the opportunity to explore the different contexts where support for learning and teaching may be required within the classroom. The candidate should identify and describe their role in relation to the following contexts:

- Individual pupil work
- Small group activity
- Large group activity
- Assisting pupils to stay on task/concentrate
- Assisting pupils to follow classroom routines
- Assisting pupils to follow teachers instructions

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Strategies, which could be adopted to support pupils in their learning, should also be explored. A variety of strategies appropriate to the above should be introduced to the candidates, strategies could include:

- Giving appropriate praise and encouragement
- Providing one to one attention
- Goal setting for the pupil
- Planning work to be achieved with the pupil
- Reasoning and negotiating
- Providing clear explanations and instructions
- Changing activities if appropriate in consultation with the teacher
- Developing self worth and independence
- Developing teamwork and co-operation
- Developing problem solving techniques
- Asking appropriate questions

When examining strategies it would also be appropriate to explore and emphasise the importance of valuing the learning process. The candidate should gain an understanding of the importance of encouraging independence and the ability to solve problems, including procedures for completing tasks rather than placing the emphasis on the finished product. Consideration should also be given to the individual needs of pupils when examining appropriate strategies. The candidate may wish to consider the confident pupil, the shy pupil, the pupil with special educational needs and the gifted pupil.

Throughout the work for this outcome candidates must at all times consider the role and direction of the Class Teacher.

NB. Evidence of actual performance within an educational setting is necessary to achieve this outcome.

Outcome 3

The candidate should gain a basic awareness of current educational and curriculum initiatives relevant to the educational setting where the classroom assistant works. This may involve the exploration of local initiatives in operation within educational settings and at present (2000) could include local response to national initiatives such as target setting, raising achievement, baseline assessment, early intervention programmes.

Candidates should then be given the opportunity to focus on how these educational and curriculum initiatives impact on the pupils whom the classroom assistant supports. Examination of appropriate initiatives at either early, middle or upper stages of primary may be appropriate depending on where the classroom assistant is placed within the educational setting.

Note, however, that the classroom assistant may work with more than one class group and stage of primary.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Candidates should also be introduced to curricular areas as detailed in 5-14:

Tutors should be aware of the need to highlight that provision for the 5-14 curricular is not fixed and will reflect the curricular priorities which may vary over time.

- Expressive arts
- Language
- Religious and moral education
- Mathematics
- Environmental studies

Descriptions of what each curricular area encompasses and examples of relevant class activities should be discussed. The classroom assistant should also develop an awareness of how the whole curriculum contributes to the personal and social development of pupils.

Outcome 4

Candidates should be aware of the ways in which the classroom assistant can support the class teacher in promoting the development of pupils. Candidates should be aware that the classroom assistant is taking a support role and that any activity undertaken is with the guidance of the class teacher. Consideration must also be given to the individual needs of the pupil. The candidate may wish to explore what some of the individual needs may be for example, aptitude for a specific activity, prior attainment, reluctance to participate, levels of confidence.

Candidates should explore the support they can provide to aid development of pupils by relating this to class activity, key areas to be examined should include:

Language Development

Support offered by the classroom assistant under the direction of the teacher may include:

- Personal interaction with pupils
- Reading and/or telling stories and rhymes
- Guiding pupils to sources of information
- Encouraging pupils to talk
- Listening to pupils
- Being an audience for pupils reading
- Labelling pupils work appropriately
- Being aware of environmental print
- Support in relation to modern languages.

Numeracy Development

Support offered by the classroom assistant under the direction of the teacher may include:

- Support with counting and matching games and rhymes
- Practising number bonds and tables with pupils
- Developing appropriate language
- Participation in building with shapes
- Supporting practical measurement activities
- Supporting pupils in carrying out surveys in information handling

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Other areas of the curriculum to be examined should include:

Expressive Arts

Support offered by the classroom assistant under the direction of the teacher may include:

- Preparation of an appropriate range of materials for art, music, drama and physical education
- Participation with pupils in music, drama, P.E. - encouraging creativity and imagination supervising and ensuring safety
- Contributing new ideas and materials
- Encouraging pupils to talk expressing ideas and increasing self esteem and confidence.

Religious and Moral Education

Support offered by the classroom assistant under the direction of the teacher may include:

- Encouraging pupils moral values and attributes to develop eg. consideration for others
- Preparation of materials which will help develop a knowledge and understanding of christianity and other world religions considering celebrations, festivals, ceremonies and customs
- Encouraging pupils to develop confidence and ability to express their own questions and recognise different points of view.

Environmental Studies

Support offered by the classroom assistant under the direction of the teacher may include:

- Preparation of materials for investigations in science or social subjects
- Supporting practical investigative work on a small group basis
- Encouraging questioning and problem solving during activity
- Providing additional explanation and reinforcement of task to encourage further exploration
- Supporting activities in technology

Personal and Social Development

Support offered by the classroom assistant under the direction of the teacher may include:

- Promoting positive behaviour
- Encouraging pupils awareness of themselves, other people and cultures
- Supporting activities which encourage independence and co-operation
- Giving pupils praise and encouragement and encouraging responsibility

The candidate should also examine the day to day contribution that the classroom assistant can make to the reporting and recording of pupil progress, reporting tends to be orally whilst recording is usually written.

The candidate must identify any mechanisms that are in operation to record and/or report on pupil progress. Mechanisms will vary between settings depending on establishment policy and teacher guidance. The candidate may wish to explore formal and informal reporting opportunities at end/beginning of the day where feedback on pupil progress may be appropriate. The completion of any written records for example, checklists that pupils have completed specific tasks or any other recording method considered appropriate by the setting.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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The candidate should be aware that they have contact with the pupil in a variety of different situations some of which may not involve the class teacher. For this reason the importance of accurate recording and reporting should emphasise the skills of giving key details such as the pupil name, the date and any appropriate contextual information. Candidates should be given a basic awareness of the purpose of reporting and recording and be made aware that the interpretation of any records or reports is the class teacher's responsibility.

NB. Evidence of actual performance within an educational setting is necessary to achieve this outcome.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

In delivering this unit there should be a balance between teacher/lecturer exposition and candidate centred learning. This unit can be taught using a variety of methods:

- Brainstorming
- Small group exercises
- Group discussion
- Case studies

Candidates should be encouraged throughout to contribute from their own experience of work within an educational setting. It is necessary to draw on the requirements of individual local authorities and educational settings it may therefore be appropriate to involve visiting speakers.

Outcome 1

Candidates could be given job description/specifications and guidelines to discuss key job responsibilities. Candidates could be asked to investigate and report on the range of professionals and roles within the educational setting. Management responsibility could be explored by the individual candidate within their setting and by clarification with a local authority visiting speaker. Characteristics of effective relationships could be tackled through group discussion and lecturer exposition.

Outcome 2

Following teacher/lecturer exposition candidates could examine qualities and skills, contexts for support for learning and strategies through group discussion, brainstorming, case studies and exercises. Candidates could draw on experiences within their setting to further clarify contexts and strategies adopted. Case studies and video material may help to explore strategies. It would be expected that in their place of work or during a period of work placement candidates would get the opportunity to demonstrate appropriate strategies. Confirmation of competence would be undertaken by a member of the teaching staff. This could be supported by candidate written evidence ie. reflective log.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Outcome 3

Following lecturer/teacher expositions candidates could investigate initiatives/guidelines in relation to their place of work or work placement. Curricular areas and class activity could be explored by group activity and discussion based on candidates' experience. Formative reports summarising key points could be prepared.

Outcome 4

Following lecturer/teacher exposition candidates could establish support they could offer through group discussion, brainstorming or written exercises.

Recording and reporting could be explored by individual candidates within their setting and information shared with the group lecturer/teacher exposition would follow to clarify key points. Candidates would be expected to demonstrate support to pupils through work experience or placement. Confirmation of competence would be undertaken by a member of teaching staff. This could be supported by candidate written evidence ie. reflective log book/written exercises.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

A variety of approaches to assessment could be used. These would include:

- Case studies with associated questions
- Written reports which could be based on investigative project work
- Short answer and/or restricted response questions
- Demonstration of competence within the work environment confirmed by teaching staff and supported by candidates' reflective log and/or written material.

Integration of assessment across outcomes may be used where this is considered appropriate.

SPECIAL NEEDS

This unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering special alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment and Certification Arrangements for Candidates with Special Needs/Candidates whose First Language is not English* (SQA, 1998).