

Strengthening Early Career Teacher and Teaching Assistant Deployment for Educational Inclusion in Mainstream Primary Schools: A Programme for Professional Development

What is the course about and why is it important?

Teacher attitudes towards inclusion and special educational needs and/or disabilities are critical in shaping children's experiences of school. Equally, the effective deployment of teaching assistants has been identified as a key factor in developing classroom practices that are inclusive of all learners. Yet, for many early career teachers, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the deployment of support staff are areas where they often feel underprepared.

This professional development programme takes a workshop approach to these issues, recognising that teaching assistant deployment can vary considerably between schools. It aims to work with early career teachers and teaching assistants to develop more equitable and inclusive classroom pedagogies that can be enhanced by, but are not wholly reliant on the availability of teaching assistant support. Throughout the programme's three sessions, participants will be given the opportunity to engage with current research and use this to explore their own school and classroom context as part of an ongoing process of professional inquiry.

Co-designed with a working group of early career teachers and experts in the field and drawing on data from a national survey, the programme will address the most pressing professional development needs identified by practitioners in this area. It will broadly cover the following key themes:

- Inclusive pedagogy and universal design for learning
- Models of classroom deployment
- Expanding strategies for pupil support
- Planning, preparation and feedback
- Navigating teacher-TA relationships

The programme will be run by Dr Geoffrey Lewis, a postdoctoral researcher from the Department of Education Studies at the University of Warwick. Geoff is currently leading the Strengthening Early Career Teacher and Teaching Assistant Deployment for Educational Inclusion project. Before becoming a researcher, he worked in primary schools for fifteen years in various roles, including class teacher, senior leader and SENCo. More information about the wider project and its associated personnel can be found [here](#).

Who can take part in the programme?

The programme is open to early career teachers in their first or second year of teaching who currently work in a mainstream primary school located in England. Schools are also strongly encouraged to support teaching assistants to take part in some or all of the programme's sessions (N.B., This will be most valuable if the teaching assistant works regularly alongside the early career teacher, but is not required). Places will be limited to one early career teacher and one teaching assistant per school. Schools that choose to take part will be able to choose between a hybrid or online-only option so that schools located beyond the vicinity of the University of Warwick still have the option of taking part. There is space for 15 schools on the programme: 10 places for the hybrid programme and 5 places for the online-only programme.

How do I take part?

You can take part in the programme by completing this [online form](#). Please note that completion of the form will be taken as a commitment to attend all three sessions of the programme. If you are unable to commit to the times of these sessions, please leave these places open to other participants. Please note that teacher and teaching assistant participation in the programme should be supported by a senior leader or mentor prior to completing the form. Funded places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. In the event that there are no places left on the programme, please add your name to the standby list to receive further information about taking part.

What do you and your school get for taking part?

There is no cost to schools that opt to take part in the programme. Additionally, your school will receive a £100 payment from the University of Warwick to provide teaching cover for the first session of the programme. Payment will be made following the early career teacher's attendance at all three sessions of the programme. Participants will receive electronic copies of all resources used in the programme. At the end of the programme, participants will be invited to evaluate the programme and suggest ways in which it can be improved. Participants will also be invited to contribute to an edited collection of writing reflecting on how the programme has influenced their classroom practice.

What will taking part in the programme involve?

The programme requires participants to attend three sessions in May and June 2025 (see timetable below). To accommodate schools located further away from the University of Warwick campus, schools can choose between an online-only and a hybrid version of the programme (see table below). Session 1 of the Hybrid programme will take place in-person at the University of Warwick. Lunch and refreshments will be provided free of charge to participants attending Session 1 in-person. All other sessions will take place online via Microsoft Teams.

Online-only option (5 school places)	Hybrid option (10 school places)
<p>Session 1 Wednesday, 14th May 2025 2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. <u>Online</u> via MS Teams</p>	<p>Session 1 Thursday, 15th May 2025 1:00 – 4:30 p.m. (including lunch between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m.) <u>In-person</u> at the University of Warwick Main Campus (CV4 7AL)</p>
<p>Session 2 Thursday, 5th June 2025 3:45 – 5:00 p.m. <u>Online</u> via MS Teams</p>	<p>Session 2 Thursday, 5th June 2025 3:45 – 5:00 p.m. <u>Online</u> via MS Teams</p>
<p>Session 3 Thursday, 19th June 2025 3:45 – 5:00 p.m. <u>Online</u> via MS Teams</p>	<p>Session 3 Thursday, 19th June 2025 3:45 – 5:00 p.m. <u>Online</u> via MS Teams</p>

If you would like further information about the programme, then please get in touch by emailing Geoff.Lewis.1@warwick.ac.uk