



**Office for Standards  
in Education**



## **Schools' use of temporary teachers**

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**HMI 503**

**December 2002**





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## **Contents**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Main findings</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Recruiting temporary teachers</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Strategies used by schools to cover for an absent teacher</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>How schools support temporary teachers</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Induction arrangements</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Lesson planning</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Managing teachers' performance</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Providing professional development opportunities</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Effect of temporary teachers</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Effect on other teachers and senior managers</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Effect on the quality of teaching and learning</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Effect on pupils' attitudes and behaviour</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Key features of good practice</b>	<b>15</b>



## Introduction

- 1.** Schools recruit temporary teachers (often known as ‘supply teachers’) to cover lessons when a permanent teacher is not available. In this report, temporary teachers are defined as those whose contract with the school is for less than 12 months. The number of temporary teachers has increased gradually over recent years; by January 2001, they constituted about 4.5% of the teaching force in England’s maintained schools. There has been a small reduction in the number of temporary teachers employed in the past year.
- 2.** Temporary teachers are employed to cover particular classes because the permanent teacher is absent. This may be due to personal reasons or illness, or because the teacher is involved in a professional development activity. Temporary teachers may also be employed by schools to provide cover for vacant teaching posts.
- 3.** In the academic year 2001/02, Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Schools (HMI) visited a sample of 93 primary, secondary and special schools to inspect the recruitment and deployment of temporary teachers, the support provided for them and how they affect pupils and permanent staff in the schools. The schools represented a range of sizes and social and economic contexts; the proportion of pupils who were entitled to free meals ranged from below 1% to over 80%.
- 4.** The aims of the survey were to evaluate:
  - | the effectiveness of schools’ procedures and practices in recruiting, inducting, deploying and monitoring the work of temporary teachers
  - | the nature and quality of the support and training available for temporary teachers
  - | the influence of temporary teachers on pupils’ learning and the standards that they achieve.
- 5.** During the inspections, discussions took place with the headteacher, senior and middle managers and with permanent and temporary teachers. Where possible, inspectors observed lessons taught by temporary teachers. They scrutinised samples of pupils’ work in classes taught by temporary teachers. In addition, this report draws on evidence on the use of temporary teachers from section 10 inspections of schools in the past two years.
- 6.** Concerns about the quality of the work of some temporary teachers have led to a number of recent government initiatives. These have included:
  - | a voluntary Quality Mark for teacher supply agencies and LEAs, based on a set of standards in terms of the recruitment and development of temporary teachers, and relations with schools
  - | guidance to schools on the management of temporary teachers to obtain the best value for money
  - | a set of self-study materials for supply teachers to support their professional development.It was too early to evaluate the effect of these initiatives in this survey.



## Main findings

- q The extent to which schools use temporary teachers varies very widely. At the lower end of the spectrum, schools are able to manage their use effectively, especially through regular use of known teachers; at the upper end, it constitutes an unacceptably high proportion of the total teaching and pupils' learning and progress are adversely affected.
- q Approximately one third of the secondary schools and two thirds of the primary schools had built up a group of trusted and experienced temporary teachers on whom they could call to cover for teacher absences or unfilled vacant teaching posts. Many of these teachers were available at relatively short notice, challenged pupils with appropriately demanding tasks, and added significantly to the schools' ability to provide education of a consistent quality, despite staff absence.
- q In some parts of the country schools relied heavily on agency teachers to enable them to staff their classes adequately. The quality of these teachers varied considerably, ranging from very good to those lacking sufficient teaching competence. In some instances, the procedures used by the agencies to vet the competence of the teachers were considered inadequate by the schools.
- q Temporary teachers teach a higher proportion of unsatisfactory or poor lessons than permanent teachers – twice as many in primary schools and four times as many in secondary schools. Where temporary teachers fail to provide an acceptable quality of teaching, there are several reasons that frequently apply:
  - l they are unfamiliar with the school and the pupils
  - l they are required to teach age groups or subjects for which they have not been trained
  - l they have too little understanding of the National Curriculum requirements, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies or examination syllabuses
  - l there is a lack of continuity in the teaching because they have been poorly briefed about what should be taught and the expectations that they should have of the pupils, or because the lesson plans they receive are inadequate
  - l there is not enough assessment information available to enable them to match the work to the capabilities of the pupils in the class.
- q The quality of some pupils' work had declined in approximately half of the secondary schools as a result of being taught by temporary teachers for a significant period of time. Frequently, this was because:
  - l the teachers were not specialists in the subject
  - l a succession of short-term temporary teachers had not been able to support pupils' progress systematically
  - l the performance of long-term temporary replacements had not been monitored effectively.
- q In just over half of the secondary schools, and approximately one quarter of the primary schools, pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour in lessons taught by temporary teachers were of a lower standard to those in lessons taught by permanent teachers in the same school. Problems were more likely to occur when temporary teachers were employed for very short periods, without sufficient time to build effective relationships with their classes, and where particular classes were taught by a succession of temporary teachers.
- q The arrangements for the induction of temporary teachers were at least adequate in most of the schools, but in a small number there were no formal procedures. Where the arrangements were weak, the temporary teachers were not given sufficient information about the school, including key policies and procedures, nor did they receive enough detail about the pupils they would be teaching. Nevertheless, most temporary teachers found the schools welcoming and supportive.

## Schools' use of temporary teachers

- q The majority of the schools provided temporary teachers with at least adequate lesson plans to support them in their teaching. They were also sometimes supported very effectively by teaching and support assistants, especially in primary and special schools; these members of staff provided important information on pupils' capabilities and specific needs, which enabled the temporary teachers to match their teaching more closely to the pupils in the class.
- q Arrangements for monitoring the performance of temporary teachers tended to be, at best, informal. As a result, quality assurance of the work of temporary teachers was generally weak and schools did not know whether work set was completed to the required standard. Few of the teachers, except some on longer-term contracts, were involved in the schools' formal performance review procedures.
- q Temporary teachers on longer-term contracts frequently received opportunities for professional development and generally welcomed these. In primary schools in particular, they valued highly opportunities for training that were related to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, especially where their previous training had been fragmented because of their irregular patterns of employment.
- q The efforts made by schools to minimise the effect of staff absence or unfilled vacancies on the permanent teachers and pupils, and their attempts to provide effective support for temporary teachers, often increased significantly the workloads of senior managers, curriculum co-ordinators and heads of subject departments. This reduced the time available for their other responsibilities and, in the most challenging circumstances, threatened their ability to function effectively.

## Recruiting temporary teachers

7. The number of temporary teachers recruited and the number of supply days that they worked varied significantly between schools. Analysis of the use of temporary teachers shows that its incidence is highest in certain types of schools. It is greatest on average in the group of schools where over half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, compared with those with lower proportions. In terms of geography, its use is highest in schools in inner London and other urban areas and lowest in the shire authorities. This trend is particularly evident in secondary schools.

8. The cost of employing temporary teachers is a significant element in the budget of many schools. Data from almost 3,000 schools inspected in 2001/02 shows that, on average, primary schools had spent 3.4% of their budgets on temporary teachers in the previous financial year. The range was from less than 1% to around 10%. The average in inner London was 4.6%. In cash terms, a minority of primary schools had spent in excess of £50,000. On average, secondary schools had spent 2.2% of their budgets on temporary teachers with a range from less than 1% to around 7%. The average in inner London was again higher at 4.3%. A significant number of the secondary schools had spent in excess of £50,000 and some over £150,000.

9. The balance of reasons for using temporary teachers differed between the primary and secondary schools. In the main, temporary teachers in primary schools covered lessons while permanent staff were engaged in professional development activities. Fewer days were used to cover for staff illness, and, typically, few to cover for vacancies. Schools with the most disadvantaged intakes, however, were more likely to have vacancies covered by temporary teachers. In two of these schools, for example, about two thirds of the supply days were used for this purpose.

10. The secondary schools were twice as likely to use supply cover to replace staff absent because of illness than to cover for teachers undertaking staff development activities. In general, the most disadvantaged schools used temporary staff to cover teaching vacancies; in these schools, most of the deployment of temporary teachers was for this purpose and, in some cases, it represented a major challenge to the stability of their staffing.

11. The length of contracts of temporary teachers varied with the nature of their role. The contracts were generally of the following types: one year's or one term's duration to cover vacant posts; of unspecified length, to cover maternity leave or illness; or of one day, to cover for a teacher's absence to attend a training event. Contracts were sometimes designed so that the temporary teacher could meet regular commitments on particular days each week. In the secondary schools, teachers were occasionally contracted to teach specific subject groups, for instance when an examination group had lost its specialist teacher.

12. Approximately one third of the secondary schools and two thirds of the primary schools had built up a group of temporary teachers on whom they could call. These teachers had become well acquainted with the school, its procedures and the pupils. They had frequently taught at the school, for example before taking early retirement from teaching, or had built up a professional relationship with the school over time through filling several temporary posts. Many of these temporary teachers were available at relatively short notice and added significantly to the schools' ability to provide education of a consistent quality despite staff absence.

13. Most schools also recruited temporary teachers from supply teacher agencies, especially when late notification of a staff absence had been received, or when the demand for temporary cover was particularly high because, for example, a number of teachers were attending in-service training activities on the same day. The rapid growth of supply agencies has helped reduce the time that schools' senior management teams spend securing temporary teachers at short notice. However, even so, many senior managers in the worst affected schools frequently reported spending considerable amounts of time, both in the school and at home during evenings, attempting to arrange absence cover at short notice. In a minority of the primary schools, school secretaries were given significant responsibility for finding replacement teachers; on occasion, they worked from home in the evenings in order to ensure that all classes had a teacher the following day.

14. It was clear that, in some parts of the country, schools relied heavily on agency teachers to enable them to staff their classes adequately. In a special school for pupils with multiple disabilities, for example, the

headteacher relied extensively on overseas-trained agency teachers to cover a number of unfilled vacancies. She reported that the quality of some of these teachers was very good, although there was a minority about whom she had strong reservations. On a number of occasions, senior staff in the schools questioned the quality of the process by which agencies had vetted their teachers. One secondary school, for example, had been on the verge of dismissing a teacher from the school for incompetence when the agency withdrew him. The headteacher of a primary school reported asking an agency not to send overseas-trained teachers as, in her experience, their command of English was too often inadequate. Good quality agency teachers were frequently requested by name once a school was confident of their ability. However, schools occasionally employed particular temporary teachers despite having reservations about their performance, rather than having no supply cover at all; headteachers regretted having to make these decisions.

**15.** In the past, LEAs commonly maintained lists of approved temporary teachers on which their schools could draw. Some maintained a 'pool' of such teachers, paid by the authority. Several LEAs had begun to reintroduce or strengthen their temporary teachers' services. Those that had lists on which schools could draw tended to have clear and visible systems for checking teachers before they were able to gain entry to the authority's lists.

**16.** Towards the end of the inspection, new regulations required the checking of teachers by the Criminal Records Bureau. There was clear evidence that the slow processing of applications was hindering the employment of considerable numbers of temporary teachers, especially those employed by supply teacher agencies.

## Strategies used by schools to cover for an absent teacher

**17.** The use of temporary teachers, especially in small schools, affects other teachers in the school, particularly the curriculum co-ordinators, heads of subject and senior teachers who are required to manage the day-to-day staff cover arrangements and plan work for classes to undertake. The schools adopt a range of strategies to minimise the adverse effect of temporary teachers on the other teachers and on the pupils.

**18.** The schools try, where possible, to provide cover from within their existing staffing, especially for short-term absences. On occasion, this is achieved by employing an additional teacher so that supply cover is readily available. One school had extended the contract of a teacher with a half-time timetable to a full-time post so that he could provide internal cover. In another, all teachers received additional non-contact time that could be drawn upon, on a rolling basis, to provide internal cover when necessary. This enhanced staffing was funded through the money that would normally be spent on purchasing external supply cover.

**19.** Where internal cover for lessons is not possible, schools use a range of strategies to try to ensure that temporary teachers are well supported and that classes are taught effectively. In many of the secondary schools, for example, where the temporary teacher was not a relevant subject specialist, classes were reorganised, particularly where subjects with a strong practical element such as design and technology, science, and physical education were involved, or where the class was preparing for an examination. Normally this reorganisation enabled a subject specialist to teach the affected group. Other strategies included putting two classes together, or organising paired teaching so that the temporary teacher taught with a specialist. In some schools, a specialist teacher on the permanent staff taught the group for a key part of the lesson before returning to their own classes, allowing the pupils to make progress with specialist work with the support of the temporary teacher for the remainder of the lesson. In a minority of cases, the non-specialist temporary teacher was provided with a small amount of subject-specific training. Some of the schools reorganised timetables to ensure that no class received all its teaching in a particular subject from temporary teachers.

**20.** A minority of secondary schools did not assign to temporary teachers particular classes, such as examination groups approaching critical periods in their schooling and those that were known to be difficult to teach. More commonly, temporary teachers were given a full range of classes to teach. In a small number of the schools, however, the temporary teachers were asked to teach predominantly pupils in the lower sets to enable permanent staff to teach the upper-ability groups. This often led to disaffection amongst both the temporary teachers and the pupils in those classes.

**21.** Most of the primary schools had few difficulties in securing the services of suitable temporary teachers when internal cover could not be provided. In these schools, the temporary teachers generally covered the work of the absent class teacher and the timetable was rarely reorganised. There were exceptions, particularly where classes had been adversely affected by staffing problems in the past, where a suitable specialist was not available to teach an early years' group, or where pupils were preparing for national tests. In such cases, classes were reorganised to make best use of the expertise of the permanent staff. One school had a very small group of pupils with learning difficulties and behaviour problems and preferred to use the headteacher and a learning support assistant when the usual teacher was absent. Another, with a unit for pupils with behavioural disorders, used the special needs co-ordinator, who was not class-based, to cover for absence of the unit's permanent teacher.

**22.** In two of the special schools, temporary teachers normally covered for the absent teacher in the primary department, but the headteachers tried to ensure the use of specialists for teaching the pupils in the secondary age-range.



## How schools support temporary teachers

### Induction arrangements

**23.** Induction arrangements for temporary teachers were at least adequate in most of the secondary schools. The temporary teacher was usually met by a member of the senior management team and introduced to key staff, often very briefly, at the start of the school day. In one school, new teachers visited the school for an introductory talk and a tour of the building before they began work. In most of the schools, temporary teachers received a booklet of useful information, including details of school procedures, sanctions and rewards, the teachers' duties, the work for each lesson, class lists, a map of the school, and a list of key staff. Those on short-term appointments received lesson plans and those on longer-term contracts were given the department's scheme of work. The most effective support documents contained information about resources and useful suggestions for teaching activities.

**24.** In a small number of the secondary schools, there were no formal induction arrangements. Where everything was left to the head of subject, the quality varied considerably. In a significant majority of the schools, teachers employed for short periods received little or no information about the pupils they were teaching, for example prior attainment data or details of pupils' special educational needs. This limited considerably their ability to match their teaching to the individual needs of pupils.

**25.** Induction arrangements were adequate in over four fifths of the primary schools; those that had a small pool of regular replacement teachers were frequently able to regard them more or less as they did their permanent members of staff. In one school, teachers who were employed in the school for up to five days received a standard pack containing essential basic information; a fuller document was provided for those staying longer to help them integrate more fully into the school. The basic pack included the school prospectus, a summary of facilities and procedures, and details of routines, staff names, emergency arrangements and first-aid provision. Several schools provided a copy of the staff handbook and some had summarised this in a document specifically written for temporary teachers.

**26.** Most of the temporary teachers interviewed found schools welcoming and supportive, although their experiences of induction varied widely. Some received thorough briefings from the permanent teacher, where the absence was planned; others were simply pointed in the direction of the class. Schools invited temporary teachers who taught well to return, and this helped make such teachers feel regarded as established staff members. This could lead to a gradual withdrawal of support, the longer the appointment. A temporary teacher in a secondary school who was on a long-term contract, for example, experienced an unwelcome reduction in the specialist support that she still needed for the subject that she was teaching.

### Lesson planning

**27.** In the secondary schools, teachers who knew that they were going to be absent from school, for example to attend in-service training events, generally provided plans for the lessons that their temporary colleagues were to teach. Heads of department often planned the work when teachers were unexpectedly absent for a short period, for example because of illness. Temporary teachers on longer-term contracts sometimes received lesson plans based on a national scheme of work, with cross-references to the schools' textbooks; this helped to reduce lesson-planning time. Where lessons were to be taught by non-specialist temporary staff, the permanent teachers frequently prepared tasks that could be completed by the pupils without the teacher's direct support, although such tasks at times simply occupied the pupils and lacked challenge. Nevertheless, the quality of the lesson plans used by temporary teachers was at least satisfactory in two thirds of the secondary schools. Planning tended to be less good when staff absence was unexpected because the work had to be set at short notice and was often less purposeful as a result.

**28.** Planning was appropriate in three quarters of the primary schools. Where the absence was known about in advance, the class teacher usually provided planned lessons; in some cases, class teachers were able to discuss the proposed work with the replacement teacher in advance. Teachers in parallel classes frequently provided significant levels of support, as did teaching assistants, often giving valuable information on pupils' capabilities and progress. Similarly in the special schools, teaching assistants often added significantly to the quality of the support provided for temporary teachers.

### Managing teachers' performance

29. Arrangements for monitoring the performance of temporary teachers in almost all of the schools tended to be informal. In the secondary schools, heads of department normally had the direct responsibility for monitoring the performance of temporary teachers. Informal observations of teaching, examination of pupils' work and comments from pupils and parents, as well as from other teachers, were the most common ways in which they did this. However, their teaching and other responsibilities limited their ability to monitor effectively. There was considerable variation in the quality and extent of monitoring between departments, even where schools had clear expectations of what heads of subject should do, and effective monitoring was rare. Even where the permanent teachers had conscientiously prepared detailed work for their classes, senior staff rarely undertook sufficient monitoring to ensure that it had been completed. This was also commonly the case when the absence cover was provided internally.

30. Largely as a result of weak monitoring, few of the secondary schools routinely provided temporary teachers with feedback on the quality of their work. Where they did, they tended either to do so informally or to intervene because there were serious concerns about performance. There were a few examples, however, where longer-term replacement teachers were the subject of the same performance management processes as the permanent staff. They were assigned a senior member of staff as a mentor who monitored their work, provided helpful feedback and offered support and guidance.

31. Arrangements for monitoring temporary teachers in primary schools were also mostly informal, although those on long-term appointments were sometimes involved in the schools' usual performance review procedures. In the majority of the schools, the headteacher or deputy had responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of temporary teachers; they often visited classrooms, particularly following the recruitment of a new temporary teacher, to see if there were any problems, but seldom to conduct a formal observation. While lesson observations enabled management to gain a proper overview of the quality of temporary teachers' work, some headteachers were concerned that these procedures were seen as threatening by the temporary teachers and could put at risk their continued availability. Although this concern is understandable, it cannot be allowed to prevent the proper monitoring of the work of temporary teachers and their effect on the pupils' learning. One school provided written feedback to its temporary teachers, and a small number gave some oral feedback, offering advice or praise. The results of monitoring were recorded formally in only a small number of the schools, in one case only because the supply agency requested reports on its employees.

32. In the majority of schools in all phases, the first priority in determining the effectiveness of a temporary teacher was their ability to manage the class. Only then did they focus on their ability to have a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. Where the temporary teacher was on a short-term contract, this emphasis on class control was understandable. However, it is of concern that the effect of longer-term temporary teachers on pupils' learning, even when the absent teacher had carefully planned the work to be covered, was often not monitored sufficiently.

33. Although temporary teachers who meet the eligibility criteria can apply for threshold assessment, they had done so in only five of the primary schools and six of the secondary schools; none of the temporary teachers in the special schools had made an application. There was very commonly a lack of understanding of how threshold assessment should operate in relation to temporary teachers, not least because they sometimes had difficulty in producing sufficient evidence of their ability to bring about progress in pupils' learning.

### Providing professional development opportunities

34. Temporary teachers employed for longer periods in a school, or those employed on a regular but intermittent basis, were frequently offered opportunities for professional development. Staff development opportunities were most likely to relate to one of the national initiatives. In the primary schools, for example, training usually focused on literacy or numeracy and such opportunities were generally welcomed because the teachers' previous training had often been fragmented. In most cases, the funding of these activities came from the schools' staff development budgets, although some teachers voluntarily attended professional development days and other training without pay. In a small minority of the schools, however, temporary teachers either did not take up the offer of staff development or were not invited to take part.

## How schools support temporary teachers

Teachers on short-term contracts rarely engaged in professional development activities. Some supply teacher agencies and local education authorities (LEAs) offer professional development opportunities for such teachers, but rarely as part of a regular programme.



## Effect of temporary teachers

### Effect on other teachers and senior managers

**35.** All schools attempted to minimise the effect that staff absence or unfilled vacancies had on the permanent teachers as well as on the pupils. Despite this, there were organisational and planning tasks that the teachers had to undertake to ensure that classes were effectively taught, whether a permanent member of staff or a temporary teacher was supplying the cover. These tasks included: arranging the lesson cover with the LEA, an agency, or with an individual permanent or temporary teacher; adjusting the timetable, if necessary; planning work and ensuring that the necessary resources were available; and marking pupils' work if the cover teacher was not required to do this. Whether cover was provided internally or by employing temporary teachers, there was inevitably a significant increase in the workload of the permanent staff.

**36.** In the special schools, virtually the whole of the additional workload involved in arranging cover unavoidably fell on the senior management team. In the secondary schools, members of senior management shared the tasks with heads of subject departments who were normally responsible for preparing cover lessons on a day-to-day basis. Heads of department sometimes reorganised the teaching timetable so that they taught Key Stage 4 and post-16 classes themselves rather than a temporary teacher. This occurred particularly where a suitable subject specialist was not available and meant loss of time allocated for their other management responsibilities effectively.

**37.** Senior managers in all of the schools were sometimes diverted from their own teaching and management roles by the need to deal with problems that arose in the classes taught by temporary teachers. Where the use of temporary teachers was high, and particularly in some secondary schools, a senior teacher was often designated to be available 'on call' to deal with issues as they occurred. In such schools, the extra burden placed on senior staff by the widespread use of temporary staff put at risk their ability to carry out their other management responsibilities effectively.

### Effect on the quality of teaching and learning

**38.** Drawing on the evidence from large numbers of school inspections, the annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools highlighted that the quality of teaching by temporary teachers as a cause for concern.<sup>1</sup> For example, in 2000/01 the percentage of unsatisfactory or poor lessons taught by temporary teachers was significantly higher than the figure for qualified teachers with more than one year's teaching experience – twice as high in primary schools and four times as high in secondary schools. Nevertheless, in nearly half the lessons taught by temporary teachers in primary schools, and a third of such lessons in secondary schools, the quality of teaching was good or better.

**39.** Many of the schools in the survey employ the same temporary teachers on a relatively regular basis. This practice has the advantage of increasing the teachers' familiarity with the schools' policies and practices on aspects such as behaviour management, and the setting and marking of homework. It also allows the temporary teachers to understand the schools' expectations of them with regard to planning lessons and marking work, involvement in direct teaching, as distinct from supervision, and completing pupils' assessment records. The demands made by these teachers on the pupils, coupled with the availability of effectively planned lessons to match the age and ability in the class, were frequently found to be comparable with those of the permanent teachers.

**40.** Teachers employed on short-term contracts in schools, often on a daily basis, however, are frequently less effective for a number of reasons. For example, the pre-planned tasks provided by the school are often undemanding, poorly matched to the ability of the pupils and insufficiently designed to support pupils in making progress. In a significant number of instances, the teachers have little or no access to pupils' records, so they are unsure of the abilities and attainment levels of the pupils and have little understanding of pupils' special educational needs. Temporary teachers with good generic teaching skills, however, often provide effective cover for short-term absence even when teaching outside their main subject specialism.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools 2000/01

**41.** In just over half of the secondary schools, temporary teachers were appropriately deployed and there was generally a good match between their subject expertise and the classes to be taught. Their effectiveness tended to be less, however, where they had a qualification that was a close, but not precise, match to the subject that they were being required to teach. This occurred, for example, where scientists taught mathematics, German specialists taught French, or teachers of geography taught another of the humanities subjects. In the remaining secondary schools, temporary teachers were frequently required to teach outside their subject specialisms or at a level that they were not competent to undertake, for example advanced level work.

**42.** The quality of some pupils' work had declined in approximately half of the secondary schools as a result of being taught by temporary teachers for a significant period of time. Reasons for this decline included temporary teachers who were not specialists in the subject, a succession of short-term temporary teachers who had not been able to support pupils' progress systematically, and the performance of long-term temporary replacements not being monitored sufficiently closely. It was particularly disappointing for permanent teachers to return to work to find that the work they had planned, lesson by lesson, had not been completed and that homework had not been set. Once the permanent teacher returned, the standard of the pupils' work often returned to normal, but frequently only after considerable additional lesson preparation and teaching time and the setting of extra homework. Pupils on Key Stage 4 courses, involving assessed coursework, were those who experienced the greatest disadvantage.

**43.** More than three fifths of the primary schools maintained effective continuity and progression in pupils' learning, despite the number of temporary teachers. In the remaining schools, the work of the temporary teachers was often less effective because they were required to teach age groups for which they had not been trained, had too little understanding of the National Curriculum requirements, or lacked a sufficient awareness of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the temporary teachers occasionally had good subject knowledge, but found it difficult to convey information and to explain concepts to pupils of primary school age. The less effective temporary teachers had particular problems in making suitable demands when teaching mixed-age classes grouped by ability for English and mathematics. Lack of detailed knowledge of the pupils' capabilities played a significant part in preventing these teachers from judging the appropriateness of the responses of the classes.

**44.** Given the negative impact that temporary teachers can have on pupils' progress, it was disappointing that only a few schools kept accurate records of the degree to which particular classes had been taught by temporary teachers. One secondary school, for example, had written a computer program which not only matched teachers to classes but also kept a running total of the number of temporary teachers teaching each class. Most of the schools, however, did not monitor their use of temporary staff effectively nor the effect of these teachers on pupils' learning. Such monitoring is particularly important for Key Stage 3 classes as these tend to be affected disproportionately by the use of temporary teachers.

### **Effect on pupils' attitudes and behaviour**

**45.** In just over half of the secondary schools and approximately one quarter of the primary schools, pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour in lessons taught by temporary teachers were of a lower standard to those in lessons taught by permanent teachers in the same school. Problems with pupils' behaviour occurred more often when temporary teachers were employed for very short periods or where particular classes had a succession of temporary teachers.

**46.** Where poor behaviour hindered effective learning, the teacher was often inconsistent in implementing strategies for developing and maintaining good class control. In a Year 2 English lesson, for example, three pupils crawled under their desks rather than listen to their temporary teacher, and one continually banged his shoe on the floor. The teacher was unable to keep control and little learning took place. An English department in another secondary school experienced considerable problems when an enforced absence was covered by a succession of temporary teachers. Matters improved significantly when a specialist English teacher taught the class for the final three weeks of the permanent teacher's absence. Such examples were not rare; temporary teachers who worked in schools irregularly and for short periods inevitably had limited time in which to establish positive relationships with the pupils. These difficulties were frequently compounded by the weak monitoring of temporary teachers by schools and a lack of adequate feedback both to the teacher and, where appropriate, to the teacher supply agency.

## Key features of good practice

47. Regardless of whether temporary teachers are used regularly or intermittently, the key features of effective practice in recruiting and deploying them, in all types of school, are:

- q The careful induction of temporary teachers into the school by using materials that are matched to their period of employment. Teachers on short-term contracts are made aware, often through a simple and short document, of the key information that they need to enable them to perform effectively. Staff on longer-term contracts are provided with sufficient information on the school's procedures and practices to help them function, over time, as established members of the school's staff.
- q The mentoring of temporary staff by a clearly identified senior teacher who provides guidance and support, especially with regard to managing classes and maintaining discipline, and gives constructive feedback on the quality of the temporary teacher's work.
- q The provision of simply structured and clearly explained medium-term and short-term plans that also define the teaching expectations, the resources to be used, the demands that should be made of the class and the homework that should be set.
- q The provision of information to the temporary teacher about the abilities and prior attainment of the pupils in the class and the targets that they should be helped to achieve, to help the teacher focus the teaching and provide adequate challenge.
- q The provision of access to professional development opportunities to help long-term temporary staff, especially, to continue to improve their subject knowledge and pedagogical skills.
- q The management of temporary staff so that all involved understand what is required and the professional standards that must be met.





