

# **A systematic literature review on the perceptions of ways in which teaching assistants work to support pupils' social and academic engagement in secondary classrooms (1998-2005)**

Review conducted by the Working With Adults Review Group

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The results of this systematic review are available in four formats:

**SUMMARY**

Explains the purpose of the review and the main messages from the research evidence

**REPORT**

Describes the background and the findings of the review(s) but without full technical details of the methods used

**TECHNICAL  
REPORT**

Includes the background, main findings, and full technical details of the review

**DATABASES**

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These can be downloaded or accessed at <http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/reel/>

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## List of abbreviations

AEI	Australian Education Index
BEI	British Education Index
BERA	British Association for Educational Research
BGC	Bishop Grosseteste College
BTA	Bilingual teaching assistant
CA	Classroom assistant
CIREA	Centre for Innovation in Raising Educational Achievement
CPD	Continuing professional development
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DfEE	Department for Education & Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EAL	English as an additional language
ERIC	Educational Resource Index and Abstracts
FTE	Fulltime equivalent
GTC	General Teaching Council
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher education institution
HLTAs	Higher level teaching assistants
IBSS	International Bibliography of the Social Sciences
ITE	Initial teacher education
KS	Key Stage
LA	Local authority
LEA	Local education authority
LSA	Learning support assistant
MLD	Moderate learning difficulties
NQT	Newly qualified teacher
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PGCE	Post-Graduate Certificate of Education
PMLD	Profound and multiple learning difficulties
QA	Quality assurance
QTS	Qualified teacher status
SEBD	Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
SEN	Special educational needs
SENCO	Special educational needs co-ordinator
SLD	Severe learning disabilities
SNA	Special needs assistant
STA	Specialist teaching assistant
TA	Teaching assistant
TDA	Training and Development Agency for Schools
WoE	Weight of evidence



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# Abstract

## What do we want to know?

What are stakeholders' perceptions of the role of teaching assistants in secondary schools?

## Who wants to know and why?

There is a widely held belief that teaching assistants (TAs) lighten teachers' workloads, support learning and increase the level of pupil engagement, thus securing inclusion for pupils with special needs and raising standards. The National Agreement on workforce reform sets out plans to free teachers to focus on teaching and learning, and to develop the roles of TAs in schools; new teachers need to be prepared for working as part of a team. This requires information about the current roles of teaching assistants, and where they are most effective. The report will be of interest to policy-makers, initial teacher trainers, school managers, teachers and teaching assistants.

## What did we find?

A systematic search of the literature was

- **Teaching assistant (TA)** responses tended to focus on their direct contributions to learners (academic and socio-academic). They believed that they made significant contributions to pupil engagement and saw themselves as key figures in the education of children. There was an awareness that TAs could interfere with the integration of pupils, but they claimed to be promoting independence.
- **Teacher** perceptions were generally positive, welcoming the support and flexibility that the presence of an additional adult gave them. There were indications that TAs were a source of motivation for teachers and that they were critical in bringing about inclusive practices.
- **Headteachers** valued the contributions of TAs,

particularly to inclusion. They recognised, however, that TAs could create a culture of dependence.

- **Pupil** perceptions centred around the teaching assistant being someone to turn to, to listen to them and to help the teacher. At the secondary level, TAs were seen as co-learners; models of how to learn; and less the authority figure than the teacher. However, some pupils could see interventions by TAs as intrusive and unhelpful.
- **Parents** were often unsure about the nature of TA contributions, but felt that TAs were often critical to the education of their children and in some cases to their inclusion.
- Studies also confirmed that the presence of additional adults in the classroom is not perceived to be a guarantee of social and academic engagement. While most perceptions appear to be positive, the negative perception of pupils over-protected by TAs was mentioned in a number of our included studies. Indeed, some older pupils expressed annoyance at the intrusiveness of some TAs.

## What are the implications?

- TAs are perceived to be much more than auxiliary staff who assist teachers with routine tasks. In their direct interactions with pupils, they are perceived to be making significant pedagogic decisions. However, one worrying incidental finding was the lack of time for TAs and teachers to plan and evaluate their work.
- The results suggest that TAs support learning under the direction of the teacher but are semi-autonomous and make pedagogical decisions in their interactions with pupils. Further training is needed for TAs and teachers to avoid the creation of dependence or a sense of intrusiveness.

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- The results also suggest that TAs play a role in inclusion, which has implications for their training (e.g. what to include, opportunities for supervision, observation, feedback and guidance). We need to know more about the added value of their presence and what happens when their support is not available.

### **How did we get these results?**

A systematic review identified 168 studies, of which 17 were selected for in-depth review.

### **Where to find further information**

<http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Default.aspx?tabid=456>

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# Executive Summary

## Background

This review forms the second in a series of reviews focusing on the role and contributions of adults other than teachers in the classroom. The first review (Cajkler et al., 2006) focused on stakeholder perceptions about the contributions of primary school teaching assistants (TAs) reviewing the literature in the period 1988-2003. This led to a broad systematic map of 145 studies about the contributions of TAs in general, and an in-depth review of 17 studies focusing on parents', teachers', pupils' and TAs' perceptions of teaching assistant contributions to academic and social engagement in mainstream primary classrooms in the UK and Europe (1988-2003).

This second review has updated the first, leading in the first instance to a systematic map of 168 studies that investigated the contribution and roles of TAs working in classrooms in the period 1988-2005. For this second review, an in-depth analysis of 17 studies of stakeholder views was conducted about secondary school TAs.

This review has been carried out in the context of the following:

1. The 'National Agreement' on workforce reform (DfES), which set out plans to remodel the school workforce by freeing teachers to focus on teaching and learning and by developing the roles of TAs in schools.
2. The need to prepare new teachers for working as part of a team in support of pupils' learning (DfES/TTA, 2002)

Recent years have seen a large increase in the number of TAs in UK classrooms (DfES, 2005). There is a widely held belief among policy-makers and authors of literature reviews that TAs play a significant role in lightening teachers' workloads and in supporting learning and increasing the level

of pupil engagement, therefore securing inclusion for pupils with special needs and raising standards (for example, Howes et al., 2003; Lee and Mawson, 1998; OfSTED/HMI, 2002). Some studies have explored the conditions of service of TAs (for example, Neill, 2002a; UNISON, 2004) while others have revealed a wide range of tasks that TAs fulfil in supporting pupils' learning (for example, Howes et al., 2003; MENCAP, 1999). However, the majority of the studies appear to provide overviews rather than an in-depth analysis of particular contributions that TAs play in supporting pupils' learning and engagement.

## Aims

This review aims to systematically to identify which voices are represented in the research literature and what their views are about TAs' contributions to academic and social engagement in secondary schools.

The specific aims of the review are as follows:

- to update the map established by the Review Group for its first review which covered the period 1988-2003 (Cajkler et al., 2006)
- to identify studies which explore the views of principal educational stakeholders (pupils, parents, teachers and pupil) about the contributions of TAs working to support pupils' academic and social engagement in secondary schools
- to make recommendations for initial teacher education (ITE) practice and continuing professional development (CPD), policy and research, with particular reference to staff working in support of pupils' academic and social engagement in secondary schools

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## Review question

This review set out to answer one main question:

*What are the perceptions and experience of the principal educational stakeholders (pupils, parents, teachers and teaching assistants) of what teaching assistants do in relation to pupils' academic and social engagement in secondary schools?*

## Methods

Methods using the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre) guidelines and tools for conducting a systematic review (EPPI-Centre, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c and 2003d) were employed throughout.

Reports were identified from the following sources:

- Educational Resource Index and Abstracts (ERIC)
- British Educational Index (BEI)
- Australian Educational Index (AEI)
- PsycInfo
- ISI Web of Science
- International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS)
- ArticleFirst
- handsearches of journals
- citations in reference lists of all included systematic and non-systematic reviews
- personal contacts

More than 10,000 citations were reviewed, using inclusion and exclusion criteria successively to the titles and abstracts. 511 papers were screened in full, with quality assurance (QA) screening supplied by the EPPI-Centre. The 168 studies remaining after application of the criteria were keyworded using the EPPI-Centre's Core Keywording Strategy (EPPI-Centre, 2003a) and online database software, EPPI-Reviewer (EPPI-Centre, 2003b). Additional keywords that are specific to the context of the review (review-specific keywords) were added to those of the EPPI-Centre. Again, QA was provided by the EPPI-Centre.

Studies identified as meeting the inclusion criteria for the in-depth review were included in the in-depth review. For this stage, the focus was narrowed to target studies that would yield data about the contributions that paid TAs make to academic and social engagement in secondary

schools. These were analysed in depth, using the EPPI-Centre's Data-Extraction Tool (EPPI-Centre, 2003d). The EPPI-Centre's weights of evidence (WoE) framework was used to ascribe overall quality and relevance to the findings and conclusions of different studies:

- A) Soundness of studies (internal methodological coherence), based upon the study only (WoE A)
- B) Appropriateness of the research design and analysis used for answering the review question (WoE B)
- C) Relevance of the study topic focus (from the sample, measures, scenario, or other indicator of the focus of the study) to the review question (WoE C)
- D) An overall weight of evidence (WoE D) taking into account A, B and C was then calculated.

Pairs of Review Group members, working first independently and then comparing their decisions before coming to a consensus, conducted data-extraction and assessment of the WoE judgments. Members of the EPPI-Centre helped with data-extraction and quality-assurance of a sample of studies.

The data was then synthesised to bring together the studies which answer the review question and which meet the quality criteria relating to appropriateness and methodology. A coding comparison analysis was conducted of the perceptions found in each study and a narrative commentary was produced.

## Results

A total of 10,545 potentially relevant papers were identified (10,023 from the first review, with a further 522 for the period 2003-2005) from the initial searches.

We applied the inclusion and exclusion criteria successively to the titles and abstracts reducing the number to 511, which we screened in full. We examined the 511 full reports with quality assurance (QA) screening supplied by the EPPI-Centre.

After screening for relevance to the review, using the pre-established inclusion and exclusion criteria, 186 papers were included in the systematic map. Some of these papers were additional reports of studies already included in the map, so the map was effectively reduced to 168 studies, which were mostly descriptions. Studies were included if they looked at the perceptions of stakeholders about teaching assistant contributions to social and academic engagement in primary and secondary schools.

## The characteristics of the studies in the systematic map

The map includes the 145 studies analysed in our first review (Cajkler et al., 2006). Further searches updated the map to its final state covering the period 1970-2005. Keywording of the 168 studies revealed the following general features:

- There were 67 studies that included at least a partial focus on secondary schools; the rest were primary school studies while only 19 focused entirely on secondary schools.
- The most frequently heard voice was that of teachers (N=49), then TAs (N=45), followed by headteachers (N=27), reflecting similar distribution to that found in the first study (Cajkler et al., 2006). Much less frequently consulted were pupils, who found a voice in 31 of the 168 studies in the full map and only 19 out of the 67 cross-phase and secondary school studies. Parents' views were represented in 29 studies included in the map and 15 of the cross-phase and secondary school studies.
- The literature considering contributions of teaching assistants is predominantly from the USA and the United Kingdom, accounting for 152 of the 168 mapped studies, USA (N=90) and the United Kingdom (N=62), with smaller numbers from elsewhere: Canada (N=5), Australia (N=5), New Zealand (N=2), France (N=2), Sweden (N=1) and Italy (N=1).
- Most studies had a general focus (that is, general support for teaching and learning, or general special educational needs (SEN)), rather than support towards any particular aspect of the curriculum or an individual student to the exclusion of others. There were very few studies of support for curriculum studies at secondary level, with the exception of Science and Modern Languages, but a specific need could be identified (for example, in support of hearing impaired pupils, or pupils with a physical disability) in some studies. There were no views studies of English as an additional language or bilingual support in secondary schools but 14 in primaries.
- Inclusion was the focus in many studies: 76 studies in mainstream settings, often of pupils with specific needs (for example, Broer et al., 2005; Hemmingsson et al., 2003). Of the 67 studies that included secondary schools, 37 looked at inclusion and 30 at organisation and management (how TAs are deployed and managed in schools). This suggests that teaching assistants are clearly significant participants in the process of educational inclusion in secondary schools (Of the 19 exclusively secondary school studies in the map, seven had inclusion as a focus).

### \*Table ES1: Study of primary TA perceptions

Phase reviewed	Teacher voices	TA voices	Pupil voices	Headteachers	Parents
Secondary 1998-2005	1,650	312	816	12	138

- Questionnaires and interviews were the principal methods of collection.
- 153 studies of teaching assistants investigated paid teaching assistants; 5 studies included both paid and unpaid; and 10 studies had volunteers, two of which were secondary-specific (Ellis, 2003; Hooker, 1985).

Paid teaching assistants have a range of titles: teacher aide or paraprofessional or paraeducator in the US; classroom assistant, learning support assistant or teaching assistant in the UK, with variations on the above (for example, paid aide, special assistant, integration assistant, non-teaching assistant, and learning supporters).

## The characteristics of the studies in the in-depth review

Seventeen studies were included for the in-depth review of mainstream secondary school settings in the UK/EU. The following points summarise the characteristics of the 17 studies:

- All studies reported stakeholder perceptions about contributions made by TAs to engagement in secondary schools, but only seven studies focused exclusively on secondary schools. Ten studies included perceptions from both secondary and primary schools.
- With regard to secondary provision, it is not yet possible to identify a consensus about the organisation of TAs, whether following pupils across the curriculum or supporting in departments or faculties. This is an area for further research.
- It was somewhat difficult to identify accurately the numbers of voices represented in the in-depth review. However, the numbers represented were lower than in the study of primary TAs. It should also be noted that 1,345 out of the 1,650 teachers came from one study (Neill, 2002a)\*.
- All studies reported stakeholder perceptions about contributions made by TAs to engagement in secondary schools, but only seven studies focused exclusively on secondary schools. Ten studies included perceptions from both secondary and primary schools.
- With regard to secondary provision, it is not yet possible to identify a consensus about the organisation of TAs, whether following pupils across the curriculum or supporting in departments or faculties. This is an area for further research.
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depth review. However, the numbers represented were lower than in the study of primary TAs. It should also be noted that 1,345 out of the 1,650 teachers came from one study (Neill, 2002a).

### The synthesis of evidence about TAs' contributions

#### Stakeholder perceptions

The TAs' contribution to pupils' social and academic engagement are categorised under four major themes, following coding of the findings from the data extractions by three reviewers. A constant comparison analysis led to the labelling of a range of contributions to academic and social engagement. The three coders explored the perceptions identified in each study. The categories identified were the subject of review and four superordinate categories were agreed by the coders:

- direct academic and socio-academic contributions to pupils
- contributions to Inclusion
- stakeholder relations (for example, with parents)
- contributions in support of teachers/curriculum

The perceptions of the different stakeholders on each of these themes are discussed in Chapter 4 of the report:

- **TA** responses were enthusiastic and tended to focus on their direct contributions to learners (academic and socio-academic), while acknowledging their support role for teachers. They believed that they made significant contributions to pupil engagement and saw themselves as key figures in the education of children. There was an awareness that TAs could interfere with the integration of pupils both socially and academically, but TAs claimed to be promoting independence.
- **Teacher** perceptions were generally positive, welcoming the support and especially the flexibility that the presence of an additional adult gave them. There were indications that TAs were a source of motivation for teachers and that they were critical in bringing about inclusive practices.
- **Headteachers** valued the contributions of TAs, particularly to inclusion. They recognised, however, that TAs could create a culture of dependence.
- **Pupil** perceptions were rather limited, but centred around the teaching assistant being someone to turn to, someone to listen to them, and someone who helped the teacher. At the secondary level, TAs were seen as co-learners;

models of how to learn; and less the authority figure than the teacher. However, some pupils could see interventions by TAs as intrusive and unhelpful.

- **Parents** were often unsure about the nature of TA contributions. However, they expressed the view that TAs were often critical to the education of their children and in some cases to their inclusion (Ebersold, 2003). According to parents, support workers who had been trained in social work helped to maintain relations between pupils and teachers, often accompanying disaffected students to lessons (Vulliamy and Webb, 2003).

#### Conclusions

The results of the present in-depth review point to one clear conclusion that applies to both primary and secondary phases: that TAs are believed to make significant contributions to academic and social engagement. Nevertheless, despite the generally positive perceptions reported in the literature, studies also confirmed that the presence of additional adults in the classroom is not perceived to be a guarantee of social and academic engagement. While most perceptions appear to be positive, the negative perception of pupils over-protected by TAs was mentioned in a number of our included studies. Indeed, some older pupils expressed annoyance at the intrusiveness of some TAs.

#### Implications

The review offers the following implications:

- The studies included in this review suggest that TAs are perceived as playing an increasingly important pedagogic role and are believed to make significant contributions to pupils' learning. They are perceived to be much more than auxiliary staff who assist teachers with routine tasks, such as cleaning away materials, although that may be part of their work. TAs may well be under the formal guidance of teachers and senior managers in schools, but in their direct interactions with pupils they are perceived to be making significant pedagogic decisions. However, one worrying incidental finding from our research was the lack of planning time for TAs and teachers to plan and evaluate their work. In a number of studies, this was a concern, given the reliance that classroom activity now has on TAs (for example, Farrell et al., 1999).
- In relation to pupils' development, the results suggest that TAs are taking on increasing responsibility. TAs support learning under the direction of the teacher, but are semi-autonomous and make pedagogical decisions in their interactions with pupils, although the effectiveness of these contributions is an issue for further investigation. On the other

hand, knowing when and how to support was a key issue as intrusive approaches cause resentment and create dependence rather than independence among learners. This feeling of not wishing support to be conspicuous or intrusive was more marked as pupils got older. This is an area for development in both teacher and TA training programmes.

- The results also suggest that TAs play a role in inclusion; this has implications for their training (for example, what to include, opportunities for supervision, observation, feedback and guidance). We need to know more about the added value of their presence and what happens when their support is not available.

### ***Questions for research***

Further evidence is required on the following:

- the quality of the educational experience of children whose main contact is with TAs
- the impact of TAs working across the curriculum and the impact of TAs located in a particular curriculum area
- how TAs support subject knowledge development in the secondary curriculum
- how TAs decide when to support, how to support and when not to intervene
- how pupils feel about the contribution of TAs (to date, there has been minimal investigation of pupils' views about TAs)
- the extent to which TAs' work is supplementary, complementary or replaces qualified teacher inputs

### ***Strengths and limitations***

#### **Strengths**

The second review builds on knowledge from the first review and provides a comprehensive map of research on stakeholders' views on both primary and secondary school settings (reported in Chapter 3) and a focused in-depth study of the 17 papers that reveal insights into the ways TAs work in secondary schools (Chapter 4).

The disciplines of screening, using exclusion criteria and data extraction according to EPPI-Centre data extraction guidelines, enabled reviewers to focus very firmly on the issue of stakeholder perceptions about TAs' contributions (for example, supporting learning and intervening when appropriate).

The team approach to screening, keywording and data extraction involving pairs of reviewers checking and moderating each other's work was a

strength of the review. Three reviewers checked all studies in the data-extraction phase before the final version was agreed. A similar level of triangulation was achieved when the findings in the data extractions were analysed by a minimum of three reviewers, using a coding-comparison method. The EPPI-Centre procedure enabled the team to identify a significant number of relevant studies that address, at least in part, the question posed by the review.

#### **Limitations**

Selection of studies for inclusion in the map was not always clear-cut and may have been influenced in some cases by the pragmatic requirements of research deadlines. This may mean that there are some potentially relevant studies that were not included.

One limitation is the imbalance of stakeholders represented in the research, particularly headteachers and parents, who are under-represented. We also learn relatively little about what children think of the additional adults who help them in the classroom and even less about the views of parents.

A further limitation is the difficulty experienced in separating phase-specific perceptions. It is possible therefore that some of the reported findings may apply to both primary and secondary sectors, rather than be specific to secondary only.

The review specific keywords were limited in scope and thus did not permit as detailed exploration of the literature in the map as we would have liked. Furthermore, reducing the map to a manageable number of studies for data extraction meant that some decisions were influenced by workload management considerations.

Finally, it should be noted that the quality of studies is not high (see WoE judgments). In addition, the number of studies of stakeholder views is somewhat limited so it could be argued that the study of stakeholder views has also been rather limited. Establishing just what TAs do is not straightforward and more primary research is needed.

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## CHAPTER ONE

# Background

### 1.1 Aims and rationale for current review

This review forms the second in a series of reviews focusing on the role and contributions of adults other than teachers in the classroom. The first review from this series led to two products: a broad systematic map of studies that investigated the contribution and roles of TAs working in classrooms in general; and an in-depth review focusing on parents', teachers', pupils' and TAs' perceptions of teaching assistant contributions to academic and social engagement in mainstream primary classrooms in the UK and Europe for the period 1988-2003 (Cajkler et al., 2006). The second review seeks to build up knowledge from the first review and provides a comprehensive picture map of the research on about stakeholders' views of the work of TAs in both primary and secondary school settings, presented in the map (Chapter 3), with a detailed in-depth review of views about secondary school TAs (Chapter 4).

In the introduction to the first review, we argued that it was no longer appropriate to 'think of most children being taught by a stand-alone teacher' (Hancock et al., 2001, p 31), so detailed analysis of the research on perceptions about those who support learning is essential to inform initial teacher education (ITE) programmes such as the Post-Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) and middle management programmes in continuing professional development (CPD). This remains our view. It is not reasonable that we should prepare trainees for a stand-alone classroom teacher role, given the standards required of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and changes to conditions of service (DfES, 2002; DfES/TTA, 2002).

This review contributes to the discussion surrounding the remodelling of the teacher workforce and may inform policy decisions that relate to the deployment of in-class TAs. The review aimed to:

- update and analyse the systematic map developed in the first review (Cajkler et al., 2006)
- complete an in-depth review that focuses on perceptions about the ways in which paid TAs contribute to pupils' learning in secondary schools
- make recommendations for initial teacher education (ITE) practice and continuing professional development (CPD), policy and research, with particular reference to support for academic and social engagement

The Working with Adults Group's second review, focusing on mainstream secondary classrooms, explored the extent to which existing research had given a voice to stakeholders in the deployment and use of TAs. The synthesis should lead to greater understanding of how stakeholders (principally TAs, teachers, headteachers, parents and pupils) view support for pupils' learning and engagement. Insights gained from this are a useful source of evidence both for policy-makers and educationalists (headteachers, teachers, trainers and advisers) who are entrusted with the development of this important part of the school workforce. For example, this review summarises perceptions so that tutors in pre-service training programmes can take account of the expectations of the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA). Trainees should benefit from having expectations and programmes informed by research evidence.

### 1.2 Definitional and conceptual issues

#### *Theoretical background*

This review begins from the perspective that study of the perceptions of key stakeholders (TAs, pupils, teachers, headteachers and parents) will help to

clarify just how TAs contribute to academic and social engagement, and thus inform developments in practice; see section 1.3 for discussion of policy. There is a widely held belief among policy-makers (DfES, 2002) and authors of literature reviews (Lee, 2002) that TAs play a significant role in lightening teachers' workloads and thus indirectly supporting learning, and also directly supporting learning by increasing the opportunities for pupil engagement.

### **Definitional issues**

For the purposes of the study, several definitions were adopted. In relation to TAs in particular, definitions were slightly amended from the first review for clarification on the basis of experience, but not changed substantially. Stakeholders are teachers, headteachers, teaching assistants, pupils and parents. Others may be identified during the review (for example, perspectives from school governors or local authority staff), but our focus remained on the five stakeholder groups identified above.

Support was limited to the work of in-class support, in particular teaching assistants. This is work that contributes directly to pupils' learning and engagement in the classroom. This could mean perceptions about working together to deliver a programme of study, such as science, or Key Stage 3 English, or a modern foreign language; it could mean perceptions about the value of support in a homework club; or it could be TAs working together with teachers to inform parents of progress or lack of progress in an attempt to promote learning. It would not include perceptions about extra-curricular activities, such as running lunchtime chess clubs. The term 'teaching assistants' (TAs) refers to assistants sometimes called 'learning support assistants' (LSAs), 'classroom assistants' (CAs), 'specialist teaching assistants' (STAs), 'learning mentors' or 'learning supporters'. For the purposes of the systematic map, TAs could be either paid or volunteers, but the final focus for the in-depth study was on paid staff.

In the course of our first review, we found TAs referred to by a variety of titles, the most common including the words assistant, aide or paraprofessional, as indicated below:

*Teaching assistant*

*Teacher aide*

*Classroom assistant*

*Paraprofessional*

*Paraeducator*

*Instructional aide/assistant*

*Nursery nurse*

*Learning support assistant*

*Specialist teaching assistant*

*Special needs assistant*

*Support staff*

*Bilingual teaching assistant/paraprofessional*

*Bilingual aide*

*Welfare assistant*

*Auxiliary*

*Ancillary*

*Foreign language assistant*

*Paid aide*

*Special assistant*

*Integration assistant*

*Non-teaching assistant*

Social and academic engagement relates to involvement in the curriculum, in classroom activities and in activities that are designed to promote or secure access to learning in the curriculum, such as working with small groups in the classroom, with individuals. This may mean explaining teacher instructions, acting as a role model for behaviour or learning, or promoting interaction among pupils.

To keep the search manageable, the focus was on perceptions about academic and social engagement, encompassing interaction within the mainstream secondary curriculum, for which social inclusion is an essential part. Marjorie Boxall (Bennathan and Boxall, 1998) has a very useful concept that helps us conceptualise what is at the heart of educational inclusion, when we think about this from a cognitive perspective. She refers to 'Organisation of Experience', which is related to pupils giving purposeful attention, participating constructively, connecting up experiences, showing insightful involvement and engaging cognitively with peers. In addition to the cognitive organisation of experience, when we are talking about educational engagement, in a way we are referring to social inclusion, but, we are also concerned with the individual's active engagement in formal learning processes (Cooper et al., 2006). We are interested in TA contributions to this engagement.

Perceptions cover notions associated with terms such as views, perspectives, opinions, beliefs, thoughts, ideas and attitudes.

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### 1.3 Policy and practice background

As argued by Howes et al. (2003), reviews of research evidence on TAs' contributions are timely. This review was carried out in the context of the implementation of the 'National Agreement' on workforce reform (DfES, 2003), which set out plans to remodel the school workforce by freeing teachers to focus on teaching and learning, and through the development of the roles of TAs in schools. Review Group members also had in mind the need to prepare new teachers for working as part of a team in support of pupils' learning (DfES/TTA, 2002).

Recent years have seen a huge increase in the number of classroom assistants in UK mainstream classrooms, sometimes in support of pupils with a specific need, but often in support of all pupils. In January 2005, there were 147,400 fulltime equivalent (FTE) TAs in schools in England, with 431,700 FTE teachers, giving a ratio of 1 teaching assistant for 2.9 teachers. This represented a large rise from January 1997, when the total of TAs was 61,300 and the corresponding ratio was 6.5 to 1 (DfES, 2005). The National Agreement (DfES, 2003), Raising Standards and Tackling Workload: A National Agreement, had set the parameters for further deployment of TAs to 'remodel' the teaching workforce and relieve teachers of routine tasks, aiming to:

- reduce (progressively) teacher workloads
- remodel the workforce with redistribution of routine tasks
- reform the roles of TAs
- establish higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs) in all schools

The establishment of HLTAs (a status accorded to teaching assistants who demonstrate that they have achieved a range of professional competences) was the subject of a long process of consultation in 2003. The criteria for the award of HLTA status were developed by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) following consultation with key stakeholders, notably teaching assistants, headteachers, teachers, professional bodies, unions, and employers such as schools and LEAs during the course of 2003. As a result, 31 standards in the following domains were prescribed:

1. Professional values and practice
2. Knowledge and understanding
3. Teaching and learning activities

Since 2002, trainee teachers have been required to meet the following standard, prescribed by the Teacher Training Agency (renamed the Training and

Development Agency for Schools in the summer of 2005):

*S3.1.4 They take part in, and contribute to, teaching teams, as appropriate to the school. Where applicable, they plan for the deployment of additional adults who support pupils' learning.*

*(<http://www.tta.gov.uk/php/read.php?sectionid=108&articleid=456>, accessed 21 April 2005)*

So, this review has been motivated in part by the recent policy initiative (DfES, 2002) associated with the remodelling of teacher workloads (evaluated by Thomas et al., 2004) and the need to prepare new teachers for teamwork and the deployment of TAs (DfES/TTA, 2002). Understanding stakeholder reflections, perspectives and opinions not only about impact but also about roles and contributions of TAs in the classroom will contribute to the debate about the role and deployment of TAs and may lead to recommendations for the development of new roles, such as the HLTA.

### 1.4 Research background

Historically, much of the research on the roles of TAs has been undertaken in the USA, where perceptions of the TA contribution may differ from those currently reflected in English policy as exemplified above. French, in a study reporting the perceptions of 18 matched pairs of teachers and paraeducators (1998, cited in Giangreco et al., 2001c, p 55) reports that teachers and paraeducators are divided in views as to whether the paraeducators were assistants to the teachers or to the pupils. Giangreco and his colleagues have been prolific in researching the work of paraprofessionals with both primary and secondary research (for example, Giangreco et al., 2001, a, b, c). They cite (2001c, p 57) a further study by Marks, Schrader and Levine (1999) in which paraprofessionals reported that they 'bore the primary burden of success' for the students to whom they were assigned for support. They also reported that their contributions included:

*(a) not being a bother to the classroom teacher; (b) providing daily, on the spot, curricular modifications with little or no support from a teacher; (c) being expected to be the expert on the student as well as the recipient of recommendations from various professionals; and (d) a sense of being solely responsible for the inclusion of the student. (Giangreco, 2001c, p 57)*

There have been many studies in the USA, especially as a result of the use of paraprofessionals to support students with disabilities. Giangreco et al. (2001c) have conducted a literature review that identified gaps in the literature including about their interactions with pupils and teachers (2001c, p 57) and they also pose a number of questions:

*as increasing numbers of paraprofessionals have taken on expanded roles assisting in the education of students with disabilities within general education classrooms, many questions arise. Are the roles and duties they are asked to perform appropriate? Are they appropriately supervised? Are they adequately trained for their roles? Are they assisting qualified personnel, or are they functioning as the primary instructors and decision-makers for some students with disabilities? (Giangreco, 2001c, p 47)*

Such studies conclude that TAs are involved in a range of classroom support activities. Much of the research conducted to date has related to TAs working with children with disabilities. The EPPI-Centre Inclusion Group (Howes et al., 2003) considered the following questions in relation to paid TAs:

1. What is the impact of paid adult support on the participation and learning of pupils in mainstream schools?
2. How does the impact vary according to the type of support?

They concluded that paid TAs:

- promote the inclusion of pupils with SEN (Howes et al., 2003, p 4)
- have little demonstrable consistent impact on class attainment scores (ibid, p 5)
- play an important role as mediators, whose knowledge and understanding of pupils can be utilised to help pupils engage in learning and participation (ibid, 5)
- can positively effect pupil on-task behaviour, although overlong proximity can also have unintended negative outcomes, such as a reduction in teacher engagement with the pupil and isolation from the teacher (ibid, p 6).

While Howes et al. (2003) in their summary concluded that there was a 'lack of research that has systematically sought pupils' views about the types of support that they most value', they acknowledged the importance of identifying and reporting views. However, TAs may be appointed for a variety of roles and with policy developments, such as the HLTA in England, their deployment is not necessarily linked to special needs provision. Since the mid-1970s, research has been conducted into the ways TAs contribute to children's education. Lee (2002) reviewed some of the research and presented useful guidance on what we know and what we need to know. However, her study provided a general overview rather than an in-depth systematic analysis of the field.

Some research in the UK has been conducted into ways in which TAs are deployed in support of pupils' learning, but little of this has explored

interactions between teachers and TAs, although interest in this area is growing (see, for example, Cremin et al., 2003). Many of the studies conducted to date have exclusively focused on primary school Key Stages 1 and 2, although the growth of TAs employed in the secondary sector has led to an increase in attention from researchers: for example, the detailed studies by Mortimore et al. (1994) and Farrell et al. (1999), and the smaller-scale investigations by Bearn and Smith (1998), and Dew-Hughes et al. (1998). The study conducted for the charity MENCAP (1999) also included some secondary schools in its investigation of TAs' contributions. Neill (2002a, b) explored roles and conditions of service by eliciting the views of both primary and secondary teachers. Bowers' sample of pupils included 128 secondary pupils so that study may be informative about secondary school practice. There have also been other small-scale studies of in-class support in secondary schools (for example, Bibby, 1990; Lovey, 1996; Tennant, 2001), which explored the organisation and effectiveness of teaching teams to meet the needs of pupils with special needs.

In spite of the fact that educational researchers have increasingly focused on the voices of participants as a key source of insight into what constitutes good educational practice, pupils who are in possession of extensive knowledge of classrooms, and teaching and learning processes appear not to have been consulted. In the UK, there have been relatively few studies of pupils' views, two notable exceptions being Bowers (1997) and Jarvis (2003).

Others, notably O'Brien and Garner (2001) and Shaw (2001), have claimed that the voices of TAs have been ignored, although our first review (Cajkler et al., 2006) raised some doubt about the justification for this claim. Nevertheless, until the TDA review of practice in 2003 to inform the process of re-modelling, it was argued that the voices of TAs had not been given opportunities to contribute to policy and practice guidelines (Todd, 2003).

#### *EPPI-Centre Review of Stakeholder Perceptions (Primary Schools: 1988-2003)*

In our first review of perceptions about primary school TAs' practice (Cajkler et al., 2006), stakeholders identified a range of contributions as being part of the work of TAs, which we categorised broadly under four headings:

- direct contributions to pupils' academic and/or social engagement (socio-academic contributions)
- contributions to inclusion
- maintaining and supporting stakeholders relations

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- support for teachers

These categories are also used in the second review, which focuses on secondary school TAs.

In the first review (Cajkler et al., 2006) TAs, in particular, claimed to have a mediating role between teachers and had a teaching role, interpreting instructions or teacher language or worksheets. In some cases, it was claimed that TAs adapted pedagogy, including lessons and materials, to suit the needs of children. Not surprisingly, given the National Literacy Strategy introduced in 1998, supporting literacy or language development was often seen by stakeholders as a significant part of the TA contribution in primary classrooms (Cajkler et al., 2006).

Managing behaviour/ discipline was also a significant contribution, although it was perhaps stressed more by other stakeholders (including children in Bowers, 1997) than by TAs. Despite some TAs being assigned to address the specific needs of individual pupils, all seemed keen to stress that they saw their role as promoting pupil independence/autonomy. On the other hand, some studies reported a perception that TAs could cocoon vulnerable learners and even deny them opportunities for access to, and interaction with, teachers and with other pupils, thus prolonging or further consolidating dependency.

Headteachers, teachers and TAs claimed that securing inclusion or overseeing integration was a key contribution and addressing pastoral/social needs was considered in six of the seventeen studies (Cable, 2003; Clayton, 1993; Hemmingsson et al., 2003; Lacey, 2001; Moyles and Suschitzky, 1997; Neill, 2002a). Mediating social interaction with other pupils/ facilitating social interaction with peers (including giving advice to other pupils about impairment) featured as a perception in five studies (Clayton, 1993; Ebersold, 2003; Hemmingsson et al., 2003; Lacey, 2001; Moran and Abbott, 2002).

The traditional role of acting as teacher helpers (e.g. with routine tasks to enable teachers to concentrate on teaching) was mentioned in many studies, but headteachers and teachers seemed to give more weight to this than did TAs. Eight studies (Baskind and Monkman, 1998; Cable, 2003; Clayton, 1993; McGarvey et al. 1996; Moran and Abbott, 2002; Moyles and Suschitzky, 1997; Neill, 2002a; Wilson et al. 2002a) mentioned maintaining or developing resources. Supervising the class was usually mentioned when this was required to allow the teacher to concentrate on small groups but some whole class teaching by assistants may occur.

The TA was often seen as a key to successful inclusion. Sometimes, this involved acting as a bridge between teacher and pupils, and sometimes between parents and the school (including giving feedback on pupils' progress to parents in some

cases). In two studies (Cable, 2003; Ebersold, 2003), the teaching assistant was described as a link between stakeholders, and between teachers, parents and pupils, leading to TAs claiming an advocacy role for pupils who they supported. Giving feedback on pupils' progress to teachers was also an increasingly frequent activity. Indeed, in five studies (Baskind and Monkman, 1998; Cable, 2003; Hancock et al., 2002; Mortimore et al., 1994; Neill, 2002a), it was perceived that TAs contributed directly to the assessment of children's work.

Where pupils were consulted (for example, Bowers, 1997), they tended to value the input of TAs. Very often, there was little difference in the views of children towards different members of classroom staff (Moyles and Suschitzky, 1997). Pupils saw TAs as helpers as well as teachers: that is, people whom they could turn to for support, such as additional explanation, clarification, marking and feedback. They were also seen as people who listened to them and sometimes helped them to overcome problems.

In summary, from the first review (Cajkler et al., 2006), it appeared that TAs were perceived as being significant in securing pupil's academic and social engagement. They were described as co-educators with teachers and as increasingly important stakeholders in the education process.

## 1.5 Purpose and rationale for review

The second review of stakeholders' perceptions about TAs' contributions in mainstream secondary classrooms (1988-2005) would allow us to confirm or add to the perceptions about primary school TAs, already reviewed and summarised above (Cajkler et al., 2006).

## 1.6 Authors, funders, and other users of the review

The review was funded by the TDA, managed by the EPPI-Centre Review Team and supported in kind by the University of Leicester, Bishop Grosseteste College, Lincoln, and Newman College, Birmingham. The review was conducted under the auspices of the Centre for Innovation in Raising Educational Achievement (CIREA) and the Centre for English Language Teacher Education and Applied Linguistics (CELTEAL) at the School of Education, University of Leicester, with the principal participants in the Review Group being Wasyl Cajkler, Dr Geoff Tennant, Professor Paul Cooper, Dr Rosie Sage, and our research associates, Rachel Tansey and Dr Yonca Tiknaz. In addition, Claire Taylor of Bishop Grosseteste College, Lincoln, and Professor Stan Tucker of Newman College, Birmingham, participated in the review.

## 1.7 Review questions and approach

The overall question for the series of reviews by this group and for the update of the systematic map of the literature is as follows:

*What are the perceptions of the principal educational stakeholders (pupils, parents, teachers and teaching assistants) of what teaching assistants do in relation to pupils' academic and social engagement?*

For the in-depth analysis, this specific review sets out to answer the following question:

*What are the perceptions of the principal educational stakeholders (pupils, parents, teachers and teaching assistants) of what teaching assistants do in relation to pupils' academic and social engagement in mainstream secondary schools (1988-2005)?*

This review explored beliefs, feelings and views about the roles, contributions and processes in which TAs engage. This involved considering studies that reported perceptions about the effects of TAs on the management and organisation of classrooms in which TAs are engaged. The review provided an opportunity to identify perceptions about some of the characteristics of teamwork between teachers and TAs, and interaction between different types of staff. Our experience in the first review suggested that studies about TAs' contributions would employ a mixture of methods but would almost certainly rely on individual interviews, questionnaires and possibly focus-group discussions. This proved to be the case.

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## CHAPTER TWO

# Methods used in the Review

### 2.1 User involvement

#### 2.1.1 Approach and rationale

The review was managed by the Review Group (in liaison with the Advisory Group). The Review Group was responsible for the following:

- co-ordinating the tasks and stages associated with the review, from initial screening to final data extraction
- inviting participation from teacher educators, trainers of TAs and other users (for example, LEA advisers)
- agreeing the allocation of responsibilities for different parts of the review
- preparing and editing the final report

The Review Group included members of staff from University of Leicester, Bishop Grosseteste College (BGC), Lincoln, and Newman College, Birmingham. All three institutions are involved in initial and continuing teacher education programmes, the principal immediate beneficiaries of the review being teacher-trainers, and their trainees and teaching assistants. Users were invited to join the Advisory Group, which was expanded to include a TDA policy officer who was responsible for monitoring the remodelling of the teaching force.

The Advisory Group included three special needs teachers (from primary and secondary schools), two principals of colleges of higher education, teacher educators in three institutions (pre-service and in-service), LEA advisers with particular interest in working with TAs and the director of a school of education. The remaining members were teacher or teaching assistant educators. A variety of TAs acted as a focus group for this second review, including a specialist teaching assistant (STA) course group of 12 from Leicester Local Authority, who were

asked to act as a focus group to respond to findings from the in-depth study in December 2005. By including people with a variety of experiences and backgrounds, care was given to a fair representation of perspectives.

#### 2.1.2 User involvement in process of conducting the review

All members of the Review Group played an active role in undertaking the review. Screening of studies were moderated by four review teams of two, drawn from the membership of the Review and Advisory Group, informed by regular communications with other members of the Advisory Group who did not have easy access to databases. In this way, user perspectives were incorporated into the screening of studies. The research associate conducted the screening and moderated by the Review Group, up to the mapping stage. For the keywording and data extraction of studies, review teams of two people were drawn from the Review Group as the availability of Advisory Group members in the first review could not be sustained for this particular process

### 2.2 Identifying and describing studies

#### 2.2.1 Defining relevant studies: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

In the first stage of screening, titles and abstracts were screened by applying a number of predefined inclusion/exclusion criteria. The following inclusion/exclusion criteria had already been applied to studies from 1970 to 2003, but were re-applied to new studies found for the period 2003-05 in order to update the first review (Cajkler et al., 2006) so that it covered the period 1970-2005.

## **Inclusion**

### **1. SCOPE**

To be included, a study had to:

- a) be about supporting pupils for academic and social engagement, including special educational needs (SEN) or English as an additional language (EAL)
- b) be about the perspectives of stakeholders on the effects of TAs on social and academic engagement (including SEN, EAL)
- c) report on pupils' learning in the 4-19 age range in primary and secondary schools, and their equivalents in other countries

### **2. TIME and PLACE**

To be included, the study had to be both:

- a) reported and published in English and
- b) published in the period 1970-2005 (i.e. from the decade when the school-leaving age rose to 16 in the United Kingdom)

### **3. STUDY TYPE**

To be included, a study had to:

- a) be based on primary empirical research, reporting perceptions
- b) contain references to the perceptions of stakeholders (TAs, pupils, parents, headteachers and teachers) on the effects of TAs on pupils' social and academic engagement

## **Exclusion**

### **1. SCOPE**

Studies were excluded on any one or more of the following grounds:

- a) if they were not about supporting pupils for academic and social engagement (including SEN/ EAL)
- b) if they were not about perceptions of stakeholders on the effects of TAs on social and academic engagement (including SEN, EAL)
- c) if they were not about pupils' learning from Foundation Stage to KS5 (4-19)
- d) if they were not about the pupils' curriculum (including SEN, EAL) - extra-curricular activity lunchtime clubs would be excluded, but not initiatives such as homework clubs which relate to the curriculum

e) if the TAs were working on tasks that did not relate directly to learning (e.g. liaison with school premises officer about security in the classroom)

f) if the study was about support offered by trainee teachers or instructors.

### **2. TIME and PLACE**

Studies were excluded if they were:

- a) not published in English
- b) not published in the period 1970-2005

### **3. STUDY TYPE**

Studies were excluded if they were

- a) editorials, book reviews, literature reviews, position papers
- b) policy documents (e.g. DfES consultation paper, 2002), syllabuses, frameworks
- c) resources
- d) handbooks (e.g. Fox, 1998)
- e) methodology papers
- f) bibliographies and literature reviews
- g) non-empirical papers

### **2.2.2 Identification of potential studies: search strategy**

We conducted the searching of the databases and journals between April and June 2005. Key search terms drawing on those used in the first review (see Appendix 2.2) were used to identify potential titles and abstracts for inclusion into the map. Recent reports and articles (e.g. Farrell et al., 1999) and the EPPI-Review conducted by Howes et al. (2003) were sources of guidance for the first review and the debt to these should again be acknowledged for the second review. A set of search terms was generated to take account of variations in the use of names to describe support staff (teaching assistants, classroom assistants, classroom aides, teacher aides, learning support staff, learning support assistants, special needs support staff, learning mentors, ancillaries, paraprofessionals) and to identify perceptions (views, roles, expectations, perspectives, attitudes). These were reviewed and re-applied to bring the review up to mid-2005. Consequently, the search strategy again drew on terms that:

- suggested perceptions/views
- identified different types of TAs (learning support, special needs assistants, paraprofessionals, teacher aides)

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- indicated that the support takes place in mainstream schools, both primary and secondary

Reports and articles were identified from the bibliographic databases:

- British Education Index (BEI)
- Educational Research Information Center (ERIC)
- PsycInfo
- ISI Web of Knowledge
- Australian Education Index (AEI)
- International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS)
- Article First
- Education On-line

These were brought up to date and supplemented by handsearching of key journals recommended by members of the Review and Advisory Groups (see Appendix 2.3).

Reference lists of key authors/papers were searched and citation searches were made of key authors/papers (for example, Broer et al., 2005; Farrell et al., 1999; Gerber et al., 2001; Giangreco et al., 2001c).

Key internet sites were searched. References were explored on key websites, such as those of the following: the National Foundation for Educational Research, the Department for Education and Skills, Current Educational Research in the UK (CERUK), the European Documentation and Information Service for Education (EUDISED), the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE); the National Institute for Christian Educational Research (NICER), the British Educational Research Association (BERA), the Australian Educational Research Association (AERA) and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

The search was supported and guided by Roy Kirk, the specialist education librarian at the University of Leicester.

An EndNote database system was set up to keep track of, and to code, studies found during the review. Titles and abstracts were imported and entered manually into the Endnote database.

### **2.2.3 Screening studies: applying inclusion and exclusion criteria**

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied successively to (i) titles and abstracts of new papers identified, and (ii) full reports requested. Full reports obtained were entered into a second database of candidate studies for full inclusion in

the map. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were re-applied to the full reports and those that did not meet the initial screening criteria were excluded.

### **2.2.4 Characterising included studies (if EPPI-Centre review: EPPI-Centre generic, discipline-specific and review-specific keywording)**

Reports identified in the updated searches as meeting the inclusion criteria were keyworded using the Eppl-Centre Core Keywording Strategy for Education Research, Version 0.9.7 (EPPI-Centre, 2003a). Additional keywords, specific to the educational context of the review, were identified for the first review and these were re-used to ensure consistency (see Appendix 2.4). The review-specific mapping of studies focused specifically on the following:

- stakeholder perceptions (the review sought to identify studies that have stakeholders' views as a significant part of their research)
- teaching assistant roles and contributions
- information about the type of study (case study; interview studies; perceptions of headteachers, teachers, pupils, TAs)

The results of the keywording of studies were added to the EPPI-Centre database, REEL, for others to access via the website.

### **2.2.5 Identifying and describing studies: quality-assurance process**

Pairs of Review Group members, working first independently and then comparing their decisions in order to arrive at a consensus, conducted the application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria and the keywording. Members of the EPPI-Centre applied criteria and keyworded a sample of studies for quality-assurance purposes.

Quality assurance (QA) processes were carried out at two stages of the review: (i) screening of titles, abstracts and full text documents; and (ii) keywording of studies; QA procedures for data extractions is discussed in section 2.3.5.

#### **Screening of reports: quality assurance**

In order to establish clear criteria for inclusion, two reviewers subjected 250 citations to initial screening to evaluate the reliability and validity of the criteria and quality assure the screening process. EPPI-Centre staff also screened a sample of 50 citations to check for consistency and accuracy in the Review Group's screenings. Following confirmation of consistency, 550 citations were issued to each of four reviewers for initial trial screening. Results were discussed at a meeting of the Review Group so that potential difficulties were identified.

When screening full papers that were acquired for whole text screening (511 reports), a 10% sample of these was subjected to further moderation by members of the Review Group. EPPI-Centre staff sampled 10 papers to advise on, and establish, levels of consistency.

### *Keywording of studies*

Six reviewers applied review-specific 'pilot' keywords independently to ten studies. Then, they compared their decisions and came to a consensus about the usefulness of the keywords. In addition, two reviewers conducted a similar exercise with a member of the EPPI-Centre staff. This helped to refine the review-specific keywords. Following agreement on the use of keywords, all members of the Review Group undertook keywording. Keywordings were checked for consistency by one lead reviewer.

## **2.3 In-depth review**

### **2.3.1 Moving from broad characterisation (mapping) to in-depth review**

For this stage, the focus was narrowed to target studies that would yield data about the contributions that paid TAs make to academic and social engagement in secondary schools. This was a decision that the first Review Group arrived at when it decided to focus the first review on mainstream primary schools and the contribution of TAs to social and academic engagement (Cajkler et al., 2006). For this in-depth review, the review team applied the following additional in-depth criteria:

- a. The study had to report on pupils' learning in the 11-19 age range in mainstream secondary schools, and their equivalents in other countries.
- b. The study had to be published in the period 1988-2005 (i.e. from the year when the National Curriculum was first introduced in the UK).
- c. The final data extractions were restricted to Europe only, in the interests of both manageability and consistency with the first review.

The following in-depth criteria were applied to studies in the systematic map to identify the studies for inclusion in the in-depth review:

- They were published in or after 1988.
- They focused on the secondary (11-16/19) age group.
- The type of engagement described in the study was academic and/or social.
- TAs were paid.
- They were carried out in Europe.

- They focused on pupils engaged in mainstream education.
- Studies focused on stakeholders' descriptions of the activities that TAs are involved in, thus containing at least some description of TAs' activities.
- Stakeholders' perceptions of the contribution that such activities make to social and or academic engagement were:
  - a. a clearly stated aim of the study, or
  - b. explicitly discussed in the findings
- Studies reported their research methodology, including at least:

a. some description of how the sample was identified and /or

b. some information on the methods for collecting views / perspectives

See Appendix 4.5 for non-European studies (which were not conducted in Europe but met all other criteria above) excluded from the in-depth review; these were principally studies conducted in the USA.

### **2.3.2 Detailed description of studies in the in-depth review**

Studies identified as meeting the inclusion criteria were analysed in depth, using the EPPI-Centre's detailed data-extraction review, Guidelines for Extracting Data and Quality Assessing Primary Studies in Education Research, Version 0.9.7 (EPPI-Centre, 2003b), with the additional review-specific questions. The following details of each study were recorded: the focus of the study, the nature and characteristics of the sample (e.g. teaching assistants, special needs assistants, etc.), methods and perceptions or views described in the study.

Particular attention was given to the methods in which perceptions were elicited and the principal findings of each study. Checks were made to identify the following:

- context of the study (age range and type of school)
- stakeholder voices represented: teachers, teaching assistants, pupils, parents, headteachers and others (whether the studies had a single or multiple stakeholder view focus)
- ways in which the perceptions were elicited
- contributions identified by each of the stakeholder groups
- findings about contributions to social and academic engagement

- weighting of the evidence in the studies supporting the findings

Reviewers were instructed to use the results and conclusions sections of the EPPI-Reviewer to extract all the perceptions reported in the studies exhaustively, including full quotations about the perceptions of teaching assistant contributions to pupils’ academic and social engagement.

Some studies meeting the inclusion criteria for data extraction had already been covered by the inclusion review group (Howes et al., 2003), while other studies had been included in our first review, as they focused on both primary and secondary education. In these instances, existing data extractions were used. These were quality checked and augmented to extract perceptions about practice in mainstream secondary settings.

**2.3.3 Assessing quality of studies and weight of evidence for the review question**

Three components have been identified by EPPI-Centre to help make explicit the process of apportioning different weights to the findings and conclusions of different studies. This weight of evidence is a measure of the research quality and relevance of the study in relation to our review question. The EPPI-Centre weights of evidence are based on:

- Soundness of studies (internal methodological coherence), based upon the study only (WoE A)
- Appropriateness of the research design and analysis used for answering the review question presented above (WoE B)
- Relevance of the study topic focus (from the sample, measures, scenario, or other indicator of the focus of the study) to the review question (WoE C)

An overall weight of evidence taking into account A, B and C was calculated (WoE D).

The first review was delayed by a weakness in our application of the weights of evidence system, which was found to be inadequately nuanced to allow reviewers to make clearly differentiated judgments. As a result, the Review Group modified the system of weights to reflect the nuances of the judgments that we needed to make about the studies. This modification involved personalising the Weights of Evidence system in order to apply them consistently across the descriptive studies that we encountered.

As a result, the more refined system involved:

1. subdividing the basic three categories into low, low-medium, medium-low, medium, medium-high, high-medium, high, which allowed reviewers to make finer distinctions between studies (which

were often quite similar in approach and scope)

2. stipulating that the rating of WoE D could never be higher than the rating of WoE A, as quality of research is crucial in all studies, irrespective of the scope or message they may offer about teaching assistant contributions
3. using a numerical system that would take us from WoE A, WoE B and WoE C to WoE D, without having to re-calculate every time.

A table of the following criteria for each level was issued to reviewers.

Level	WoE A	WoE B	WoE C	WoE D
High	7	7	7	20-21*
High-Medium	6	6	6	17-19*
Medium-High	5	5	5	14-16*
Medium	4	4	4	11-13*
Medium-Low	3	3	3	8-10*
Low-medium	2	2	2	5-7*
Low	1	1	1	3-4*

\*except where WoE A is in a lower band

We introduced a structure to the way in which weights of evidence A, B and C were judged. This was the numerical scale and its word equivalent in the above table.

To support this process, weight of evidence A was referenced back to specific questions in the data extraction, pointing reviewers to particular questions that we particularly wanted borne in mind when they make a judgement on A. We then linked these questions to standards that you would expect the study to attain to be assessed as high, medium, low, etc.

**2.3.4 Synthesis of evidence**

The data was synthesised to bring together the studies which answer the review question and which meet the quality criteria relating to appropriateness and methodology. The report of the synthesis is likely to take the form of a descriptive report identifying the ways in which the voices of different stakeholders emerge in the research studies. Summaries of different perspectives may be provided to reflect the views expressed by the participants, if the views of different stakeholders are clearly differentiated. Otherwise, general tables of perceptions will be presented, with commentary on the provenance of the views expressed in the range of studies subjected to in-depth scrutiny.

Drawing on the experience of the first review, in the second synthesis, we:

- synthesised the qualitative data thematically;
- used a highlighting scheme, by hand, to code

perceptions and assist in the thematic analysis.

Ten of the papers focused on both primary and secondary schools (Bowers, 1997; Ebersold, 2003; Farrell et al. 1999; Hemmingsson et al., 2003; MENCAP, 1999; Moran and Abbott, 2002; Mortimore et al., 1994; Neill, 2002a; O'Brien and Garner, 2001; Shaw, 2001). The review builds on the initial analysis of the first set of 10 studies above, which report findings for primary and secondary schools together. In this review, we focused on identifying perceptions about secondary school teaching assistants in the cross-setting studies and in secondary-specific studies.

### ***2.3.5 In-depth review: quality-assurance process***

#### *Data extraction*

Data extraction and assessment of the weight of evidence brought by the study to address the review question were conducted by pairs of Review Group members, working first independently and then comparing their decisions and coming to a consensus. When there was a disagreement, a third member of the Review Group acted as arbitrator and negotiated a consensus. For quality-assurance purposes, members of the EPPI-Centre contributed to the process in the data extraction for the final set

of studies.

Detailed guidelines about the approach to be followed were issued, with particular focus on the extraction of results from the studies and the conclusions about TAs' contributions. The results sections of all the data extractions were examined by one of the two lead researchers and the research associate in order to ensure that the results of the studies had been recorded exhaustively and consistently (EPPI-Centre, 2003d, sections K2 and K6), using direct quotations wherever possible. In the first review, this was done after completion of five data extractions; however, in the second review, this was done from the outset.

#### *Synthesis*

The team of reviewers working independently extracted result sections of the data- extractions tool (EPPI-Centre, 2003d) by hand to identify and highlight perceptions of contributions, labelling each in turn. These extracted perceptions were compared by pairs of reviewers and grouped in recurring themes. The data extracted in this way was analysed by sorting the results of the different studies into themes by a constant comparison method, involving pairs of reviewers analysing the data for common contributions.

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## CHAPTER THREE

# Identifying and describing studies: results

This chapter describes the systematic map of 168 studies, illustrating the sources of the studies, their focus, scope and contexts, terms used to describe TAs, the nature of their work, and the voices of stakeholders represented in the mapped studies. The 168 studies, written in English, but from all parts of the world, cover the period 1970-2005 and all phases of mainstream education (nursery, primary and secondary schools). The 168 studies were keyworded and analysed in general terms.

### 3.1 Studies included from searching and screening

Two major searches took place to build the database for this review. First of all, in 2003-04, a database of over 10,000 citations was created covering the period 1970-2003. This yielded 145 studies in the systematic map, which was used as the basis for our first review (Cajkler et al., 2006). In 2005, this database was updated through a further search for studies published in the period 2003 to mid-2005. The results of this search were merged with those of the first to create a database of 10,545 possible citations. From this, we systematically mapped a further 23 studies that addressed the research question across all key stages of mainstream education (4-19), giving a combined map of 168 studies on which we could draw to analyse perceptions of teaching assistant contributions. In addition, we identified the MENCAP study (1999) that the first review had failed to identify, but it was included in the map in this review. This map contains studies of both primary and secondary school practice. However, for the final in-depth analysis, the second review focuses on TAs working at secondary level (11-19), a focus that led to detailed examination of 17 studies (10 cross-phase and 7 secondary specific).

The process of building the database for our two reviews went through the following stages:

- identifying new papers which were reported between 1970 and 2005
- searching bibliographical databases and journals

(10, 545 references identified, for screening)

- entering the citations into the ENDNOTE database
- applying inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Appendix 2.1)
- screening 511 full papers
- characterising the included studies by EPPI-Centre keywording tool
- applying in-depth criteria and refining the review question
- data extracting in-depth review studies (17)

Following exhaustive screening of the 10,545 titles and abstracts (252 duplicate citations excluded), 544 papers were identified as being potentially relevant for inclusion in the map. These required full text screening. Of the 544 papers ordered, a total of 511 were received and then the full papers were screened. This screening process was carried out by pairs of reviewers and was moderated. 168 studies (reported in 186 papers) were found to meet the inclusion criteria.

These 168 studies were keyworded, using the EPPI-Centre Core Keywording Strategy (EPPI-Centre, 2002a). This was followed by application of in-depth criteria (Appendix 2.1) to studies in the systematic map to identify which should be included in the in-depth review

This process resulted in 17 studies being identified

for inclusion in the in-depth review. Figure 3.1 summarises the stages of the systematic review. See Appendix 3.1 for a figure describing the first review on which the second review built and Appendix 3.2 for details of some of the primary focused studies entered in the updated map (e.g. Blatchford et al., 2004).

Section 1 of Figure 3.1 shows how, during the course of reviews 1 and 2, exclusion criteria were used to exclude over 10,000 studies, with criterion X1 (not about perceptions of stakeholders) and X2 (not about TAs) being the common reasons for exclusion. Of the papers, 5,875 were not about perceptions nor about TAs as defined in section 1.2.2.

### 3.2 Characteristics of the 168 included studies (systematic map 1970–2005)

Following application of the exclusion criteria to 511 full documents, the 168 studies remaining were characterised using the generic EPPI-Centre (EPPI-Centre, 2003a) and review-specific keyword tools to create a systematic map of the research literature. The keywords that were applied during this analysis constituted the basis for the data presented in this chapter. The map contained studies relating to all phases of education. The studies that include secondary schools totalled 67 and, within these, only 19 had an exclusively secondary school focus (see tables 3.2 and 3.3). The following sections report the results of the two keywording exercises.

#### 3.2.1 Generic EPPI-Centre keywords

The generic EPPI-Centre keywords (see section 2.2.4) allowed reviewers to identify the following features in the studies:

- how the paper was found (see Table 3.1)
- status: whether published or not and whether the study is linked to others
- country of the study
- language in which it is written
- topic focus (e.g. teaching and learning, equal opportunities including inclusion)
- curriculum focus, if applicable (most had a general focus, so this is not discussed)
- population focus (e.g. on TAs, learners, teachers, headteachers, parents, non-teaching staff)
- age and sex of learners (but only if learners are the focus of the study, so age will be discussed under review-specific keywords)
- educational setting of the study
- study type (e.g. trial, evaluation, description)

Comparisons were made with results from the first review and, where appropriate, these are indicated in the tables in the second column. However, almost all keywords revealed similar patterns of distribution to those for the first study (Cajkler et al., 2006).

#### *The identification of the papers*

Table 3.1 summarises the use of databases and the combined results for searches of both the first review (1970–2003) and the updated studies (2003–2005) to form the database for the second review.

Results from the first review are included for comparison in the second column, with figures in brackets showing how many were included in the map for the first review (Cajkler et al., 2006).

Note: The 186 papers in the first map were found to form 168 studies as 18 papers were linked to others in the map. These 18 papers reported on the same research projects as the lead study which we kept in the map.

The most productive searches for the map occurred using the ERIC, Psycinfo, AEI and BEI databases, even though the latter only gave limited guidance on each study, usually not including an abstract. AEI produced many references in number but few of these made it through the inclusion and exclusion screenings. ERIC yielded fewer papers than expected for the second review. 71 papers were identified through handsearching of relevant journals and from bibliographies of relevant papers. The handsearching unearthed the above-mentioned MENCAP study that added further evidence to support the picture of TA contributions described in Cajkler et al., (2006).

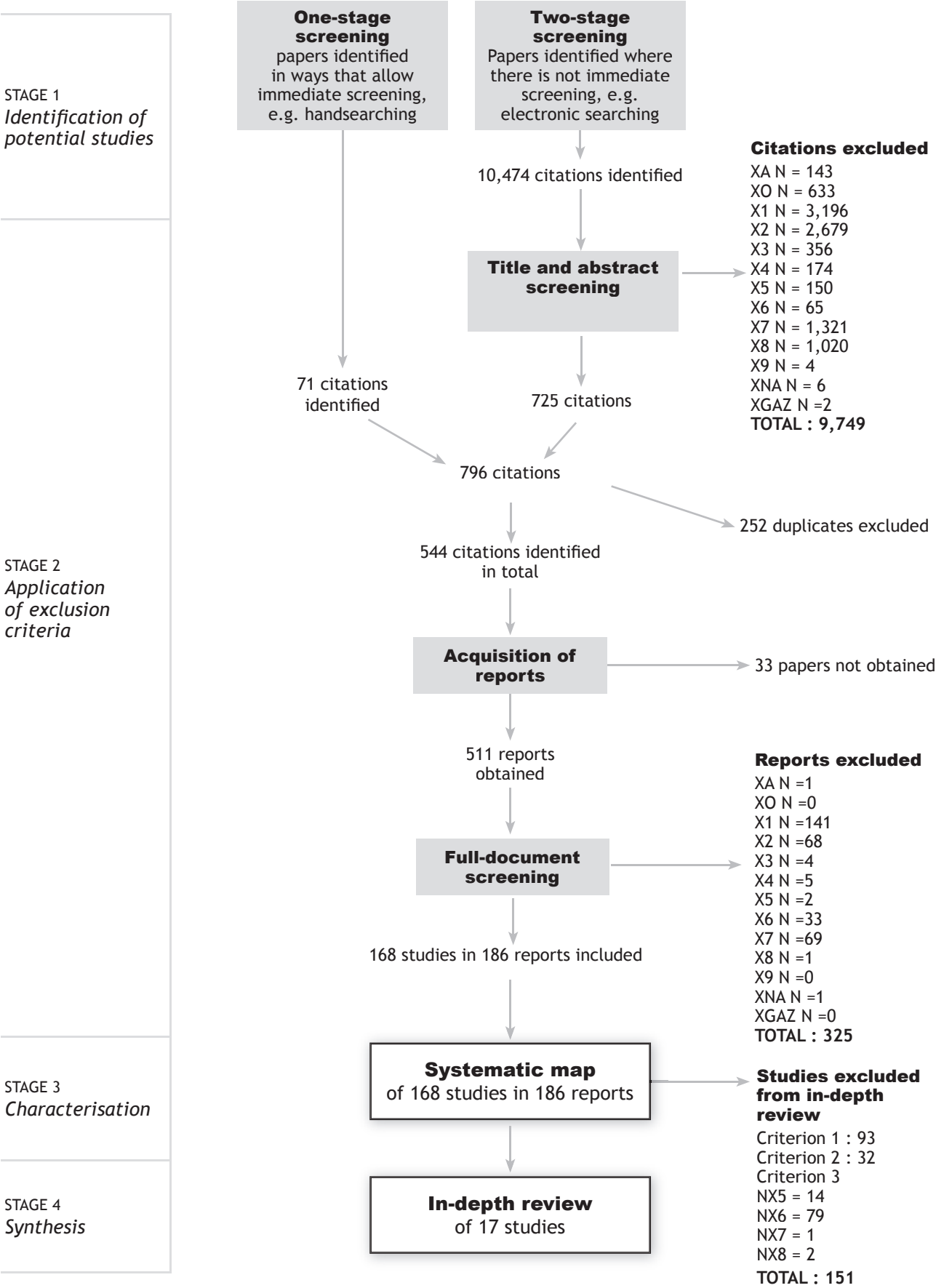
#### *Origin of studies*

The 168 studies originated from eight countries, with 66 studies from Europe (62 from the UK), five from Australia, two from New Zealand and five from Canada. The majority of studies (N=90) had been conducted in the USA, followed by 62 in the UK. There was only one transnational study comparing data from different countries, despite the prominence afforded to TAs in the USA and the UK in the last thirty years.

#### *Educational setting of the study*

The majority of the studies spanned phases of education (for example, collecting data from primary and secondary schools), so codes in the table below are not mutually exclusive. Such cross-phase and secondary school studies were in the minority (N=67) perhaps because TAs have been more commonly employed in primary schools. Of these studies, 48 focused on more than one phase of education (for example, primary/secondary or nursery/ primary/ secondary) and only 19 had an exclusively secondary school focus. Ten of the 19 secondary only studies had been conducted in the UK, six in the USA.

**Figure 3.1** Filtering of papers from searching to map to synthesis



**Table 3.1**

Database or other origin of the papers in the mapping study

	First review 1970-2003	Total found 1970- 2005	Included in map 1970-2005
ERIC	6,513 (92)	6575	95
BEI	442 (27)	478	34
Psycinfo	2,045 (16)	2127	18
AEI	515 (1)	553	3
ISI Web of Science	203 (8)	395	10
IBSS	81 (1)	136	2
Article First	167 (1)	208	4
Hand-searching	57 (16)	71	20
Personal contacts	0	2	0
Total	10,023 (145)	10,545	186

**Table 3.2**

Country of the 168 mapped studies (1970-2005\*)

Country	First review map (N=145)	Whole map (N=168)	Cross phase studies (N=48)	Secondary school only studies (N=19)
USA	83	90	28	6
UK	48	62	12	10
Australia	3	5	2	1
Canada	5	5	2	2
New Zealand	2	2	1	0
Sweden	1	1	1	0
France	2	2	1	0
Italy	1	1	1	0
Total	145	168	48	19

\*Codes mutually exclusive

**Table 3.3**

Educational setting (N=168\*)

Educational setting	First map (N=145)	Whole map (N=168)
Nursery school (5 included in primary schools)	24	27
Primary school	107	127
Pupil referral unit	1	1
Residential school	1	1
Secondary school	60	67
Middle school	0	1
Special needs schools	18	21
Other educational setting	13	16

\*codes not mutually exclusive

Table 3.4 shows the school types in the countries covered by this study. This reveals the large number of studies with a multiple focus, demonstrating the difficulty of identifying phase-specific perceptions. So, the review included few studies in the map with an exclusively secondary-classroom focus, that addressed the review question in any depth. This left the Review Group with a choice, whether to include only phase-specific studies or to include cross-phase studies that included a partial focus on secondary schools. The latter option was chosen but we decided to highlight, where possible, phase-specific perceptions.

Difficulties of classification arose: for example, Broer et al. (2005) probably focused exclusively on secondary schools but the respondents were in their 20s and were recalling their experiences at school so this was described as 'Other'. One study is described as a study of middle schools (Sabin and Donnellan, 1993, in the USA). Occasionally, reviewers had difficulty determining the exact educational setting: for example, Seyfarth and Canady (1970) seemed to focus in their report on schools in general, so was keyworded as 'Other'. Eight studies focus specifically on special education schools, but up to 14 others include a partial focus on special needs provision in special schools.

#### *Population focus*

Another classification challenge arose when trying to determine the population focus. We often found that the population focus in the studies in the map was not exclusive and the principal focus was sometimes difficult to extract as many studies had a multiple focus: for example, on several or even all the participants in the inclusion process (pupils, parents, teachers, TAs, as in the cases of Ebersold, 2003; Farrell et al., 1999; MENCAP, 1999).

Despite this, we agreed that 163 studies focused principally on TAs. This distribution was consistent whether the focus was secondary or primary or mixed phase. Anomalies occurred with Bang and Lamb (1996), DeCusati and Johnson (2004), Fox et al. (2004), whose central focus was deemed to be on learners, and Little (2003) on parents and learners. Little looked at provision for 4-17 year-olds and the perceptions of 404 mothers about the resources available to support students with Asperges syndrome and non-verbal learning disorders.

Bang and Lamb (1996) focused on reporting the views of secondary school pupils. Nevertheless, they reported the important perception that TAs greatly assisted secondary students to understand directions and stay focused on tasks, but students often became 'so absorbed in their small-group interactions with the paraprofessional that their engagement with the teacher and their non-disabled peers became limited' (p 13). As a result of this important perception, it was included in the map.

Parents had slightly higher representation in the map for the second review (13 studies being 8% of the whole map, compared with 6% in the first review). Otherwise, the proportions were similar to those of the first review. While there were no studies that focused exclusively on parents in particular in the secondary studies, their voices were nevertheless reported.

#### *Topic focus*

All but one (Chopra and French, 2004) of the studies were characterised as being about 'teaching and learning' but 45% of the studies (N=72) were additionally keyworded 'organisation and management' because they also related to how TAs were deployed and managed in schools, some in support of one learner, others in more general roles.

In addition, an even larger number of studies, keyworded as 'equal opportunities' (N=76), focused on inclusion in mainstream settings (for example, Bowers, 1997; Broer et al., 2005; Hemmingsson et al., 2003; MENCAP, 1999, among many others), involving improving pupils' opportunities to learn and/or integrate through access to the curriculum, and participate constructively in the social settings in schools. Again, codes are not mutually exclusive. Very few studies focused specifically on supporting an aspect of curriculum: for example, support for the teaching of science (Busher and Blease, 2000) or foreign languages (Chambers and Pearson, 2004); on the contrary, most had a general educational focus.

From the map, however, we could conclude that TAs are principally perceived to be engaged in issues related to teaching and learning (i.e. supporting pupils and their learning), confirming the pattern in the first review (Cajkler et al., 2006). This is certainly true of the secondary school sector as Table 3.6 shows in the final two columns.

In secondary schools, as in primaries, the principal focus was on teaching and learning, followed by securing inclusion and integration (equal opportunities). A study by Chopra and French (2004) was not coded as focusing on teaching and learning as the purpose of the study was to explore relationships with parents. In addition, very few studies focused in detail on managing behaviour, although this was often mentioned in studies as a contribution that TAs made.

#### *Study type*

The majority of studies were characterised as 'descriptions' (N=142). Two studies were classified as explorations of relationships. Where the writers claimed to be conducting evaluations, reviewers characterised accordingly, even where their interpretation might suggest that 'description' was a more apt classification for the study. In cross-phase and secondary school focused studies, perhaps a slightly higher percentage (12 of 67) involved evaluations, but this was not significantly different

**Table 3.4**

Focus of 168 studies in the systematic map (N=168\*)

	Nursery	Nursery + Primary	Nursery + Primary + Secondary	Nursery + Primary + Secondary + Special	Primary + Secondary	Primary only	Secondary only	Middle school	Primary + Secondary + Special	Primary + Special	Secondary + Special	Special	Other
AUS			1		2	1	1						
CAN			1		1	1	2						
FRA			1			1							
Italy			1										
NZ					1	1							
SWE					1								
UK	2	3	1	1	5	30	10		5	1		4	
US	4	7	5		20	30	6	1	5	1	1	4	6
Total	6	10	10	1	30	64	19	1	10	2	1	8	6

\*Codes mutually exclusive

to the pattern in the whole map.

Three studies were double-coded as descriptions and naturally occurring evaluations (Durrant and Kramer, 2005; Getz, 1972; Zeichner, 1979). The Durrant and Kramer (2005) study is cross-phase while Zeichner (1979) focused on primary schools. Turner and Miles (1980) was classified as a description and exploration of relationships, despite being called an evaluation. This explains the total of 172 keywordings.

Of the studies that focused exclusively on secondary schools (final column in table 3.7), four of the naturally occurring evaluations were pre-1988 studies conducted in the USA. Hooker (1985) focused on parent volunteers working to improve reading in secondary schools and there were three studies of paraprofessional effectiveness (Getz, 1972; Giersch, 1973; West, 1970). One of the latter (Getz, 1972) focused entirely on secondary schools, in particular English departments and bilingual education.

Of the 10 studies that focused exclusively on secondary schools in the UK, the following types were identified:

**Descriptions:** Busher and Blease (2000); Chambers and Pearson (2004); Golze (2002); Jarvis (2003); Jerwood (1999); Kerry (2003); Roaf (2003); Mortimore et al. (1994) (Mortimore et al. (1994) is a book with clearly divided sections so primary and secondary studies can be differentiated without difficulty.)

**Evaluations** (naturally occurring): Ellis (2003); Vulliamy and Webb (2003)

Busher and Blease (2000) studied the contributions of associate staff in science (technicians); Chambers and Pearson (2004) described teaching assistant contributions in modern language classes; Golze (2002) explored perceptions of TAs, technicians and administrative staff; Jarvis (2003) looked at support for hearing impaired pupils; Jerwood (1999) focused on special needs assistants, and Kerry (2003) on learning mentors. Mortimore et al. (1994), one of the most wide-ranging studies of support staff in general, explored a variety of associate staff roles and contributions; and Roaf (2004) reported TAs in focus group interviews. In the two UK evaluation studies, Ellis (2003) evaluated intergenerational mentoring (older people coming in to school to mentor pupils), while Vulliamy and Webb (2003) evaluated the effectiveness of social work trained support workers. The final data for this review was mainly contained in the studies keyworded as 'descriptions'.

### 3.2.2. Review-specific keywords

This section presents the findings for the review-specific keywording, the purpose of which was to discover:

1. the status of the TAs (paid, unpaid, volunteer)
2. which stakeholder perceptions are reported (headteachers, teachers, TAs, pupils or parents or others)
3. to whom support is offered (individuals, groups or whole class)
4. the reason for support (e.g. general; SEN; disability)
5. type of engagement involved (academic, social, or both)
6. type of method used to collect perceptions/views in study (e.g. interviews)
7. terms used to describe TAs (e.g. teaching aide; teaching assistant; learning support assistant)
8. the age of the students assisted by TAs

#### *Status of teaching assistants*

The majority of TAs (N=153) investigated in the 168 studies were paid. A small number of studies (N=5) included both paid and unpaid volunteer support. In studies that focused on secondary schools, 63 included paid aides.

#### *Stakeholder perceptions*

The mapped studies gave voice to a range of stakeholders, with TAs and teachers being most strongly represented. 72% of the mapped studies allowed TAs a voice. The next most frequently heard voice after teachers and TAs was that of headteachers. Much less frequently consulted in research studies were the pupils, who found a voice in 31 studies. Their parents' views were similarly less prominent than other stakeholders, featuring in 29 studies. Of these, 11 were UK-based studies and 14 USA studies. This distribution is also typical of studies that include secondary schools as indicated in Table 3.9. The perceptions reported in Chapter 4 of this review are dominated by teachers, TAs and headteachers. However, the proportion of studies featuring pupil and parent voices was greater than in our first review, as shown in Table 3.9.

However, proportionally, pupils' perceptions appear to be included more frequently in the UK than in the USA, with 15 studies (out of 62) in the UK offering a voice to pupils and 10 in the USA (out of 92). On the other hand, we did not find any UK studies of former pupils' perceptions similar to that conducted by Broer et al. (2005) who asked young adults to recall and reflect on their experiences of support.

#### *To whom support is offered and reasons for support*

Many reports offered more than one reason for the presence of additional adults in the classroom. Table 3.10 summarises the Review Group's attempt to

classify the reasons for the presence of additional adults in the classroom. The codes were not mutually exclusive as many studies described support of different types: for example, to include individuals with a physical disability, to offer general SEN support, to help manage behaviour or to offer bilingual support. Some studies focused on specialist teaching assistant contributions to sub-groups of learners. These included working with children with behavioural and emotional difficulties, and support workers securing inclusion for children with a physical disability. Reviewers had difficulty identifying the focus and reason for support in some studies and concluded that many studies fell into the category of general classroom support. This was true of secondary school studies.

Most of the contributions have both a social and academic dimension, and sometimes these two overlap to a great extent. For example, general classroom support could involve keeping pupils on tasks, mediating learning, interpreting instructions. This demonstrates the fact that different kinds of support are not easily compartmentalised for ease of analysis. Overall, the contributions towards social and academic engagement are very varied. The Review Group explored categories through EPPI-reviewer to seek more information about the following keywordings:

- general classroom support
- physical disability
- academic support for diagnosed condition
- behaviour management
- English as an additional language and bilingual support

#### *General classroom support*

Inclusion of pupils with particular needs, such as physical or intellectual disabilities, was the most common reason given for the deployment of TAs. However, general classroom support was identified as the reason in 76 studies. While many additional adults were assigned to individual pupils, 46% of the studies described TAs being deployed for general support to groups of pupils. Indeed, the review confirmed the recent trend towards the increasing use of assistants in mainstream classrooms for general support in recent decades. This trend is reflected in cross-phase and secondary school studies, with 32 of the 67 studies that included a secondary focus. Of the 19 secondary school studies, nine had this focus.

#### *Physical disability*

Analysing the studies of support for children with a physical disability into two categories, with one focusing principally on the pastoral/caring role (N=18), the other on providing academic support

(N=33), proved to be an unrewarding classification. Only three studies were classified as belonging exclusively to the caring category: Lamont and Hill (1991), Bang and Lamb (1996), and Chopra and French (2004). However, revisiting these studies, it was agreed that the division of pastoral/caring support and academic support could not be justified and sustained. As a result, we concluded that 37 studies in the map dealt specifically with pastoral/academic support for learners with physical disabilities. Of these, we could only identify four UK-based studies that included a focus on physical disability: Baskind and Monkman (1998), Clayton (1994), Jarvis (2003), and Moran and Abbott (2002). Jarvis (2003) focuses exclusively on secondary schools, while Moran and Abbott (2002) have a multiple focus on primary and post-primary schools with moderate learning difficulty (MLD) units. There are three mainland-European cross-phase school studies about supporting pupils with disabilities in the systematic map: one from Sweden (Hemmingsson et al., 2003), another from France (Ebersold, 2003) and one from Italy (Palladino et al., 1999).

Of the non-European studies about academic support for pupils with physical disability, only two had an exclusive focus on secondary schools (Bang and Lamb, 1996; Case and Johnson, 1986). A USA study by Minondo et al. (2001) also had this focus but this was a study of primary/middle school provision. Other cross-phase school studies included a partial focus on secondary schools, with ten in the USA (Frank et al., 1988; Gartland et al. 1985; Giangreco et al. 1997; Giangreco et al. 2001a, b; Giangreco et al., 2002; Goessling, 1998; Little, 2003; Marks et al., 1999; Stinson and Liu, 1999); one from New Zealand (Prochnow et al., 2000) and one from Australia (Arthur and Foreman, 2002).

#### *Academic support for diagnosed condition*

Of the 18 studies keyworded as covering diagnosed conditions (such as autism or dyslexia), 15 focused on primary schools; just five were cross-phase and three concentrated on nursery provision. Seven of the 18 were conducted in the UK. They explored support for pupils with varying diagnosed conditions from the viewpoints of different stakeholders:

- Bennett et al. (1996), a case study of a child with autism in a primary school
- MENCAP (1999), on primary and secondary pupils with SLD/PMLD
- Lacey (2001), on primary school teachers', pupils' with SLD/PMLD and parents' perceptions about LSAs
- Moran and Abbott (2002), whose study has a cross-phase focus covering a range of conditions (for example, SLD, MLD, partial hearing and partial sight units)

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**Table 3.5**

Population focus/foci of the study (N =168\*)

Population focus	First map (N = 145)	Whole map (N = 168 )	Cross-phase studies (N = 48)	Secondary schools (N = 19)
Learners	46	55	13	8
Senior management	23	25	10	1
Teaching staff	76	83	22	10
Non-teaching staff (TAs)	144	163	47	18
Other education practitioners	1	1	1	0
Local education authority officers	3	3	0	0
Parents	9	13	5	0
Other population focus	7	9	5	0

\*codes not mutually exclusive

**Table 3.6**

Topic focus of the study (N =168\*)

Focus	First map (N = 145)	Whole map (N = 168 )	Cross-phase studies (N = 48)	Secondary schools (N = 19)
Teaching and learning	145	167	48	19
Organisation and management (people and resources)	70	71	21	9
Equal opportunities (inclusion)	61	76	30	7
Curriculum	13	13	2	3
Classroom management (including behaviour)	8	8	1	1
Policy	8	8	2	1
Assessment	1	1	1	1
Teacher careers	1	1	0	0
Other topic focus	5	5	1	2

\*codes not mutually exclusive

**Table 3.7**

Study type of keyworded studies (N =168\*)

Study type	First map (N = 145)	Whole map (N = 168 )	Cross-phase studies (N = 48)	Secondary school only studies (N = 19)
Description	119	142	41	14
Exploration of relationships	2	2	0	0
Evaluation: naturally occurring	22	25	5	6
Evaluation: researcher-manipulated	3	3	1	0

\*codes not mutually exclusive

**Table 3.8**

Status of teaching assistants (N =168\*)

Status of teaching assistants	First map (N = 145)	Whole map (N = 168)	Cross-phase studies (N = 48)	Secondary school only studies (N = 19)
Paid only	136	153	45	17
Volunteer and paid	13	5	1	0
Volunteer	2	10	2	2

\*Codes not mutually exclusive

**Table 3.9**

Stakeholder perceptions reported (N =168\*)

Stakeholder perceptions reported	First map (N = 1,450)	Whole map (N = 168)	Cross-phase studies (N = 48)	Secondary school only studies (N = 19)
Headteachers/ senior management team	50 (34%)	57 (34%)	22 (46%)	5
Parents	20 (14%)	29 (17%)	11 (23%)	4
Pupils	21 (14%)	31 (18%)	11 (23%)	8
TAs	109 (75%)	122 (72%)	30 (63%)	15
Teachers	106 (73%)	117 (69%)	36 (74%)	13
Other	16 (11%)	18 (11%)	8 (17%)	2

\* Percentages do not add up to 100% because codes are not mutually exclusive.

**Table 3.10**

Declared reasons for the presence of TAs (N =168\*)

Declared reason for the presence of TAs	First map (N = 145)	Whole map (N = 168)	Cross-phase studies (N = 48)	Secondary school only studies (N = 19)
Foreign language lesson support	1	2	0	1
Support for young children (nursery nurse)	8	8	0	0
English as additional language	12	14	1	0
Bilingual support	N/A	14	0	0
Behaviour management	12	15	6	2
Academic support for low attainer	15	16	5	4
Academic support for diagnosed condition (e.g. dyslexia, autism)	11	18	5	0
General SEN	24	25	14	3
Physical disability (caring and/or academic support)	32	37	18	3
General classroom support	64	76	23	9
Other	14	14	4	1

\* Codes not mutually exclusive.

- MacKay et al. (2003), on primary-aged pupils with autism
- Groom and Rose (2005), on emotional/behavioural difficulties
- Fox et al. (2004), on primary-aged pupils with Down syndrome

Secondary school studies seem again to be relatively under-represented in the research literature.

*English as an additional language and bilingual support*

Unfortunately, we could find no UK/EU studies of stakeholders' views about this important support role in secondary schools. The only study that entered the map was conducted by Lee et al. in 1974, a study of trained bilingual teacher aides' contributions to the development of literacy in two primary schools and one junior high school. Otherwise, studies of bilingual support for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) have been largely confined to primary/nursery schools, eight mapped studies relating to the primary phase and five to primary/nursery provision.

Of these, only four had been conducted in the UK (Cable, 2003/2004; Collins and Simco, 2004; Cable et al., 2004). Cable's work had been included in the review of primary perceptions, but the area seems to have been relatively under-researched, particularly in secondary schools. Martin-Jones and Saxena (1996) have studied the discourse practices in classroom with bilingual TAs in two primary school reception classes but found that the main action of the classroom is dominated by monolingual English-speaking teachers; their study was excluded from our map because it was not about perceptions. Our searches revealed no comparable studies of secondary school provision. In addition, it must be noted that there were studies excluded before the mapping stage which dealt with the ways in which bilingual paraprofessionals worked in secondary schools: for example, the work of Wenger et al. (2002, 2004), which draws on culturally responsive approaches to teaching, exemplified by bilingual paraprofessionals.

*Behaviour management*

It might be perceived that TAs are often seen as behaviour managers but relatively few studies (N=15) declared that the principal reason for the presence of TAs related to behaviour management (e.g. keeping pupils on task, preventing disruptive behaviour). Nevertheless, for many TAs, this was clearly a way in which they contributed to social engagement. Nine studies were conducted in the UK, with one focusing on a secondary school

(Roaf, 2003) and two cross-phase studies (Moran and Abbott, 2002; Durrant and Kramer, 2005). In the last two cases, there is little detail about what TAs do to manage behaviour, but it is mentioned as a focus. On the other hand, Vulliamy and Webb (2003) report in detail on the contribution of social work trained support workers to bring about positive change in pupil behaviour in secondary schools. Roaf (2003) also includes TAs' own descriptions of how they contribute to managing behaviour, clearly a significant contribution in Roaf's secondary school. Nevertheless, while managing behaviour was often mentioned as being a contribution made by TAs, it was rarely the principal focus of a study, so we have very limited description in total. Other studies in the map were restricted to primary schools (Clayton, 1993, 1994; Gamman, 2003; Groom and Rose, 2003) and one to a special school (Porter and Lacey, 1999). As a result, we know relatively little about how TAs contribute to promoting positive behaviours in secondary schools.

*Type of engagement involved*

Contributions were broadly socio-academic in nature, with increasing dependence on TAs to provide direct in-class support for learning, rather than clerical/administrative support. It appeared that TAs fulfilled a number of diverse functions in relation to classroom support, with the vast majority clearly involved in both social and academic engagement. Several reports suggested that TAs are involved in significant constructive interactions with pupils (for example, Downing et al., 2000; Farrell et al., 1999; Giangreco et al., 1997, 2003; Shaw, 2001). In a minority of studies, it was difficult to classify the nature of the contributions that TAs were expected to make.

*Terms for teaching assistants*

Teaching assistants have a range of titles. In the USA, the terms are usually 'teacher aide' or 'paraprofessional' (e.g. Falk, 1975; French and Chopra, 1999; Giangreco et al., 2001a); in the UK, 'classroom assistant', 'learning support assistant' or 'teaching assistant'. Farrell et al. (1999, p 55) argued in favour of the use of the term 'learning support assistant' in the following way:

*In general, titles should be defined in such a way that*

**Table 3.11**  
Type of engagement TAs identified with (N =168\*)

Type of engagement	First map (N=145)	Whole map (N=168)	Cross-phase and secondary studies (N=67)	Secondary only studies (N=19)
Academic	24	25	7	4
Social	1	1	1	0
Both	112	133	56	15
Not clear	8	9	3	0

\*Codes mutually exclusive

**Table 3.12**

Names of teaching assistants used in mapped studies (N =168\*) and in secondary studies

Names of support	First map (N=145)	Whole map (N=168)	Cross-phase studies (N=48)	Secondary school only studies (N=19)
Teaching assistant	11	22	8	2
Teacher aide	34	36	9	3
Classroom assistant (Farrell et al., 1999; Mortimore et al., 1994; Bowers, 1997)	10	17	3	0
Paraprofessional	36	39	16	3
Paraeducator	10	14	7	0
Instructional aide/assistant	9	9	4	2
Learning support assistant	6	10	3	2
Specialist teaching assistant	3	3	0	0
Special needs assistant	2	2	1	1
Support staff	4	4	2	2
Bilingual teaching assistant/paraprofessional	5	6	0	0
Bilingual aide	1	2	0	0
Welfare assistant	3	3	0	0
Auxiliary	2	2	0	0
Ancillary	1	1	0	0
Foreign language assistant	1	1	0	0
Other	33	64	12	6

\* Codes not mutually exclusive

*there is no ambiguity about the primary purpose for them being in the school. As assistants are employed in school to assist teachers in helping pupils to learn, the term 'Learning Support Assistants' seems appropriate for all LSAs. Therefore this title should be used for all assistants who work in schools and not be restricted to those who work with pupils with special needs. The label 'LSA' should place those employees firmly within the mainstream purpose of teaching and learning. (Farrell et al., 1999, p 55)*

Despite this, LSA was found in only 10 mapped studies for this review. Until recently, teaching assistant was less common than other terms in the UK, but this term is now favoured by the DCSF (formerly DfES, 2002, 2003) and may be growing in use regardless of the type of contributions made. In the first review (Cajkler et al., 2006), 11 studies used the term 'teaching assistant' but by mid-2005 this had leapt to 22, while 'classroom assistant' had moved from 10 to 17 overall. 'Teaching assistant' featured in two UK secondary school studies (Chambers and Pearson, 2004; Jarvis, 2003).

Paraeducator (10 in the first review, but 14 by 2005) is also a term that may be gaining ground with recent studies in the US preferring this (e.g. Giangreco et al., 2003; Marks et al., 1999; Monzo and Rueda, 2001a, 2001b), although none of the secondary only studies used this term.

Paraprofessional remains a popular term in the USA (e.g. Broer et al., 2005) and occurred in three US secondary only studies (Bang and Lamb, 1996; Case and Johnson, 1986; Maslin et al., 1978).

The 'other' category includes a range of titles, many of which were variations on the above (for example, paid aide, school assistant, integration assistant and non-teaching assistant). At secondary level, these included Vulliamy and Webb's (2003) social work trained 'support workers' who focused on seeking to integrate disaffected pupils and 'communication support workers' (a variation mentioned in Jarvis, 2003). Some of these titles reflect developments in assistant roles from a focus on welfare or general support for the teacher to becoming more strongly focused on working with pupils: learning supporters (the term used by Shaw, 2001).

### Age range of pupils

The following table identifies the age range of pupils supported by additional TAs in the classroom. The EPPI-Centre Keywording strategy only requires keywording of the age of learners if the topic focus of the study is recorded as 'learners'. We resolved this issue by including age in the review-specific keywords (discussed below).

**Table 3.13**

Age range of pupils that TAs are involved with (N =168\*)

Age range of pupils	1970-2003	Number of studies 1970-2005
3-4 (pre-school)	24	38
5-10 (primary age)	107	125
11-16 (secondary age)	60	71 (67 in mainstream secondary schools)
17-19 (post 16)	6	8

\*Codes not mutually exclusive

**Table 3.14**

Type of method used to collect perceptions/views in study (N =168\*)

Methods used to collect perceptions	First review (N=145)	Whole map (N=168)	Cross-phase studies (N=48)	Secondary school only studies (N=19)
Case study	9	14	1	1
Questionnaire study	87	99	33	11
Interview with stakeholders	73	89	23	13
Opinionnaire survey	5	5	2	0
Focus group	7	10	3	3
Other	45	52	12	5

\*Codes not mutually exclusive

Schools varied in type so the above pupils could be spread across studies of different types of mainstream schools (e.g. primary/secondary/post-16) or studies of special schools or even non-mainstream settings such as pupil referral units. For a more detailed classification of the school types, see Table 3.4.

*Methods used to collect perceptions*

Most of the studies employed a variety of research methods but the predominant approaches involved questionnaires (N=99) and interviews (N=89). This is not surprising given the large number of descriptions. A feature noticed incidentally was that there were relatively few studies (about one in five) with observations conducted to complement perceptions (30 in total). In addition, the number of identified case studies remained low as with the first study, just 14: Bennett et al., 1996; Blatchford et al., 2004; Clayton, 1994; Hancock et al., 2002; Kennedy and Duthie, 1975; Lacey, 2001; MENCAP, 1999; McGarvey et al., 1996; and Mortimore et al., 1994. Of these, only two had a significant focus on secondary schools (MENCAP, 1999; Mortimore et al., 1994).

**3.3 Identifying and describing studies: quality-assurance results**

*Screening of citations*

In the course of our reviews, 250 of the 10,545 papers were subjected to initial screening by a pair of reviewers to evaluate the reliability

and validity of the criteria and quality assure the screening process. A sample of 70 entries was screened by EPPI-Centre staff to check for consistency and accuracy in the Review Group’s screenings. For the first review, 500 entries were issued to each of four reviewers for initial trial screening. The subsequent 500 screenings were subjected to scrutiny by two ‘lead’ reviewers who had been moderated by the EPPI-Centre staff to check for consistency and accuracy. Screenings of the additional 522 papers added for the 2003-2005 period were conducted by three reviewers.

*Screening of full papers*

A 10% sample of the 511 papers that reviewers had decided to screen on the full text was subjected to further moderation by pairs of reviewers. In addition, these papers were subjected to scrutiny at a meeting of Review and Advisory Groups. Along with ten excluded papers, a sample of ten included papers was sent to each member of the Review Group to check for consistency in the application of the criteria. If any doubt arose, papers were referred for second opinions.

*Quality assurance of keywording*

First of all, two reviewers independently coded ten studies for moderation with a member of EPPI-Centre staff. A whole-group moderation exercise was undertaken for which four pairs of reviewers from the Review Group independently keyworded five studies and then tabulated results. The five studies were also keyworded by an EPPI-Centre

staff member for comparison to assure consistency and accuracy. This quality-assurance check was conducted on two occasions with the EPPI-Centre staff member until agreement on keyword application was agreed. The exercise was repeated with studies for the updated map (2003-2005), with ten studies subject to moderation.

The first phase saw agreement at 78%, largely as a result of interpretational difficulties with the term 'perceptions'. In the next exercise, with a second set of five papers, 85% agreement was reached. Results of this process were discussed by the Review Group and discrepancies clarified. Particular difficulties arose with the curriculum focus, which in most cases was general. The remaining papers in the systematic map stage of the review were keyworded by three members of the group. All these were then reviewed by the co-ordinator of the review to secure consistency, making sure that all studies were keyworded in a uniform way. The repeat exercise of the updated map (2003-05) saw 95% agreement achieved. Clarifications were then made.

### 3.4 Summary of results of map

The study began by screening 10,545 abstracts and titles over a two-year period. For the map, 511 full documents were screened, leading to selection of 186 papers that addressed in part the question set by the Review Group. Following keywording and further screening, 17 studies were identified as addressing the review question and these studies are the subject of Chapter 4.

The mapped studies gave voice to a range of stakeholders, with teachers and TAs most strongly represented in more than 100 studies. Most studies had a multiple focus: for example, on all participants in the inclusion process (pupils, parents, teachers, TAs as in the case of Ebersold, 2003). Some had a single focus: for example, Broer et al. (2005), on the recollections of former pupils only.

Keywording of the 168 studies revealed the following general features:

- In the 48 cross-phase and 19 secondary school only studies, the most frequently heard voice was that of teachers (N=49), then TAs (N=45), followed by headteachers (N=27), reflecting a similar distribution to that found in the first study (Cajkler et al., 2006). Much less frequently consulted were pupils, who found a voice in 31 of the 168 studies in the full map, and 19 out of the 67 cross-phase and secondary school studies. Their parents' views were represented in 29 studies included in the map and 15 of the cross-phase and secondary school studies. Relative to the map of the first review (1970-2003), parents and pupils appear to be being consulted more frequently, but, in the 19 secondary school only studies, parents are reported in four of them and pupils in eight. While there may have been a little progress, these important stakeholders remain
- relatively 'unquestioned' about their experiences.
- The systematic map shows that the literature considering contributions of TAs is predominantly from the USA and from the United Kingdom, accounting for 152 of the 168 mapped studies, USA (N=90) and the United Kingdom (N=62), with smaller numbers from elsewhere: Canada (N=5), Australia (N=5), New Zealand (N=2), France (N=2), Sweden (N=1) and Italy (N=1). The number of UK studies reflects the increasing importance of TAs in UK schools; some of these UK studies were motivated by policy decisions and even commissioned by the British government. Of the 62 UK studies, ten were conducted exclusively in secondary schools.
- Many studies were cross-phase (48), but 67 clearly included data about secondary schools and a further four were focused on pupils in the secondary age range but they may have been in other settings (e.g. residential schools) or even have left school as in the retrospective study of Broer et al. (2005).
- Most studies focused on general support for teaching and learning or general SEN, rather than support towards any particular aspect of the curriculum. There were a number of studies for which a specific need could be identified (for example, in support of hearing impaired pupils, or pupils with a physical disability). There were no views studies of English as an additional language or bilingual support in secondary schools, but 14 in primaries. There were very few studies of support for curriculum studies at secondary level, with the exception of Science and Modern Languages.
- Inclusion (keyworded as 'equal opportunities') was the focus in many studies with 76 studies focusing on inclusion in mainstream settings, often of pupils with specific needs (for example, Broer et al., 2005; Hemmingsson et al., 2003). Of the 67 studies that included secondary schools, 37 looked at inclusion and 30 at organisation and management (how TAs are deployed and managed in schools). This suggests that TAs are clearly significant participants in the process of educational inclusion not only at primary level but also in secondary schools; 7 of the 19 secondary school studies in the map had inclusion as a focus.
- Questionnaires and interviews were the principal methods of collection. There were very few case studies, 14 in total from the 168 studies, and only two had a secondary focus (one secondary school and one cross-phase). There were very few observations to complement the findings of questionnaire and interview data. There were 142 descriptions, 25 naturally occurring evaluations, two explorations of relationships and three researcher-manipulated evaluations. Four studies were given two codes (one description and exploration of relationships, three descriptions and naturally occurring evaluations).

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- 153 studies investigated paid TAs; five studies included both paid and unpaid; 10 studies had volunteers, two of which were secondary-specific (Ellis, 2003; Hooker, 1985).
- Paid TAs have a range of titles: teacher aide or paraprofessional or paraeducator in the US; classroom assistant, learning support assistant or teaching assistant in the UK, with variations on the above (e.g. paid aide, special assistant, integration assistant, non-teaching assistant and learning supporters). One secondary school study (Vulliamy and Webb, 2003) investigated the contributions of 'support workers' who had undergone social work training.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

# In depth review: results

This section describes the stakeholder perceptions of TA contributions from the 17 studies that met the in-depth inclusion criteria. These studies were analysed by three reviewers in each case, using a coding comparison method to characterise stakeholder views about TA contributions. Ten of the studies are cross-phase so only partly focused on the work of TAs in secondary schools; seven are specific to secondary schools (see Table 4.1).

The review could have focused exclusively on secondary-specific studies, but the Review Group concluded that this would have left out a range of identifiable secondary perceptions in the cross-phase studies (for example, Bowers, 1997; Mortimore et al., 1994). Some of the studies report general findings that appear to apply to all phases (for example, Ebersold, 2003, which covered the 7-15 age range; MENCAP, 1999;).

### 4.1 Selecting studies for in-depth review

Seventeen studies (Table 4.1) met the in-depth inclusion criteria (see Appendix 2.1 for in-depth criteria). These are published reports or articles, with dissertations excluded from the study. Fifteen studies were conducted in the United Kingdom, one in Sweden and one in France. They were published between 1988 and 2005.

The studies discuss the contributions of staff who fit the description of teaching assistants (TAs), classroom assistants (CAs) or learning support assistants, with the exception of Vulliamy and Webb (2003) whose staff are social work trained support workers in school and family settings. This paper was the subject of long discussion among review members. The study specifically seeks to analyse teachers', parents/carers' and pupils' perspectives on the work of support workers, who work with families, pupils and school staff in a number of diverse but relevant ways. For instance, helping to establish whole-school policies on behaviour with school staff is an important contribution towards enabling pupil inclusion and it has implications for pupils' social engagement with the school. Therefore, the study was much wider than our focus on social and academic engagement and in-class contributions by TAs, but it was agreed that the

study met the criteria as it related to perceptions about support workers, who assisted teachers and that the description of their activities would be informative, perhaps providing a different perspective on how TAs can contribute.

The table in Appendix 4.1 gives summary details of the studies included in the in-depth review according to the review-specific questions. The complete data-extraction records for each study are stored on the EPPI-Centre website. At this website (<http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/EPPIWeb/home.aspx>), comprehensive information about the methodological processes behind each study can be explored, with more detail than is feasible or desirable in this report.

### 4.2 Comparing the studies selected for in-depth review with the total studies in systematic map

#### *Study type*

In the map as a whole, the text of the studies often did not make the study-type explicit, with some studies offering only limited explanation. However, in the final set of 17 in-depth studies, the dominant study type was description (N=17).

**Table 4.1**  
Studies included in in-depth review (N =17)

Bowers T (1997) Supporting special needs in the mainstream classroom: children's perceptions of the adult role. *Child Care Health and Development* 23: 217-232.

\*Chambers GN, Pearson S (2004) Supported access to modern foreign language lessons. *Language Learning Journal* 29: 32-41.

Ebersold S (2003) Inclusion and mainstream education: an equal cooperation system. *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 18: 89-107.

Farrell P, Balshaw M, Polat, F (1999) The management, role and training of learning support assistants. London: Department of Education and Employment.

\*Golze S (2002) Perceptions of support staff: how they see themselves and how others see them. *Education Today* 52: 39-44.

Hemmingsson H, Borell L, Gustavsson A (2003) Participation in school: school assistants creating opportunities and obstacles for pupils with disabilities. *OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health* 23: 88-98.

\*Jarvis J (2003) 'It's more peaceful without any support': what do deaf pupils think about the support they receive in mainstream schools? *Support for Learning* 18: 162-169.

\*Jerwood L (1999) Using special needs assistants effectively. *British Journal of Special Education* 26: 127-129.

\*Kerry CA (2002) Support staff as mentors: a case study of innovation. *Education Today* 52: 3-12.

MENCAP (1999) *On a Wing and a Prayer: Inclusion and Children with Severe Learning Difficulties*. London: MENCAP.

Moran A, Abbott L (2002) Developing inclusive schools: the pivotal role of teaching assistants in promoting inclusion in special and mainstream schools in Northern Ireland. *European Journal of Special Needs Education* 17: 161-173.

Mortimore P, Mortimore J, Thomas H (1994b) Secondary school case studies. In Mortimore P, Mortimore J, Thomas H (eds), *Managing associate staff: new roles in primary and secondary schools*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd, pages 86-141.

Neill, SR St J (2002a). *Teaching assistants: A Survey Analysed for the National Union of Teachers*. Warwick: Teacher Research and Development Unit, Institute of Education, University of Warwick.

O'Brien T, Garner, P (2001) *Untold Stories: Learning Support Assistants and their Work*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

\*Roaf C (2003). Learning support assistants talk about inclusion. In Nind M, Rix J, Sheehy K, Simmons K, *Inclusive education: diverse perspectives*. London: David Fulton Publishers in association with the Open University, pages 221-240.

Shaw L (2001) *Learning Supporters and Inclusion: Roles, Rewards, Concerns, Challenges*. Bristol: Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education.

\*Vulliamy G, Webb R (2003) Supporting disaffected pupils: perspectives from the pupils, their parents and their teachers. *Educational Research* 45: 275-286.

\* Secondary school only studies

*Age of students*

Many studies in the map were cross-phase with focuses on both primary and secondary schools. Only 7 of the 17 studies focused exclusively on secondary schools. One included some feedback from the pre-primary phase while 10 included perceptions from primary schools as well as secondary schools.

**Table 4.2**  
Age of students with whom TAs work (N =17\*)

Age of students	17 in-depth studies
3-4 (pre-school)	1
5-10 (primary)	10
11-16 (secondary)	17
17-19 (post-16)	1

\*Codes not mutually exclusive

In the secondary only studies (as described in Table

4.1), it proved possible to isolate views about secondary school practice, but this was difficult in the cross-phase studies. Because Mortimore et al. (1994) have clearly defined chapters of secondary school case studies, findings reported from their work relate unequivocally to secondary schools. In the case of O'Brien and Garner, the book contained few case studies of secondary practice, but these are detectable. In addition, Bowers (1997) differentiated some perceptions of secondary level pupils and Farrell et al. (1999) also provided information that enabled some differentiation. Neill (2002a) offers some guidance about feedback from different phases but this was difficult to categorise for every perception reported. In the other cross-phase studies (Ebersold, 2003; Hemmingsson et al., 2003; MENCAP, 1999; Moran and Abbott, 2002; Shaw, 2001), it was difficult to extract secondary-only perceptions. So, findings from these studies are reported with the caveat that they are not phase-specific. Hemmingsson et al. (2003), in particular, reported findings in a generic way so that the perspectives reported could not easily be assigned to

the different sets of respondents in their study.

#### *Focus of studies*

Most of the selected studies involved TAs working with more than one person, a pattern also found to be typical of primary schools (Cajkler et al., 2006). The distribution was broadly similar to that in the systematic map, as Table 4.3 illustrates. The studies indicate that TAs are involved in a variety of interactions perhaps best summarised as follows:

*In all models of inclusion LSAs were usually attached to classes and worked with a group of children, rather than a specific pupil. Some pupils had more than one LSA. (MENCAP, 1999, p 3)*

Where TAs were employed for a designated pupil, most also offered support to small groups (e.g. Bowers, 1997; Farrell et al., 1999; Golze, 2002; Jerwood, 1999; MENCAP, 1999; Mortimore et al., 1994; Neill, 2002a; O'Brien and Garner, 2001; Shaw, 2001). While 11 studies included consideration of the contribution to an individual, in all but three cases this was not an exclusive focus. So, support for pupils in general was the most common conclusion reached by reviewers. Some studies made clear that their TAs supported both individuals and small groups (MENCAP, 1999; Moran and Abbott, 2002; Roaf, 2003; Vulliamy and Webb, 2003). Just three studies seemed to highlight support for an individual: Hemmingsson et al. (2003) and Jarvis (2003) on pupils with disabilities, and also Kerry (2002) whose focus was on TAs as mentors to individual pupils.

#### *Type of engagement*

The Review Group was interested to discover the extent to which TAs were employed to look after social as opposed to academic needs. This investigation did not lead to clear differentiation, however, as all the studies included a focus on both social and academic contributions to pupils' engagement. TAs are now principally involved in direct support for learning, interacting directly with pupils to assist and promote learning. They are not in classrooms merely to assist teachers with routine non-pedagogic tasks (such as tidying, distributing materials, mounting displays or photocopying), although they may still contribute in these ways (as evidenced in mapped studies such as those by Moyles and Suschitzky, 1997; Wilson et al. 2002a, b, 2003).

#### *Reasons for support*

Some useful insights emerged from the analysis although exact classification was often difficult given the multiple focus of much classroom teaching assistant work. Table 4.5 presents our tentative classification.

**Table 4.3**

To whom support is offered\*

Age of students	17 in-depth studies
3-4 (pre-school)	1
5-10 (primary)	10
11-16 (secondary)	17
17-19 (post-16)	1

\*Codes not mutually exclusive

**Table 4.4**

Type of engagement described\*

Type of engagement	In-depth studies (N=17)	Mapped studies (N=168)
Academic only	0	25
Social only	0	1
Both	17	133
Not clear	0	9
Total	17	168

\*Codes not mutually exclusive

**Table 4.5**

Reason for support by in-depth studies (N=17\*)

Reason for support	In-depth studies (N=17)	Number of studies in the map (N=168)
Physical disability (carer)	Ebersold (2003)	18
Physical disability (academic support)	Ebersold (2003), Hemmingsson et al. (2003), Jarvis (2003), Moran and Abbott (2002)	33
Behaviour management	Moran and Abbott (2002), Roaf (2003), Vulliamy and Webb (2003)	15
Foreign language lesson support	Chambers and Pearson (2004)	2
Academic support for diagnosed condition eg. dyslexia, autism, SLD, PMLD	Mencap (1999), Moran and Abbott (2002)	18
General SEN	Bowers (1997), Jerwood (1999), Neill (2002a), Roaf (2003)	25
General classroom support	Farrell et al. (1999), Golze (2002), Jerwood (1999), Kerry (2002), MENCAP (1999), Mortimore et al. (1994), Neill (2002a), O'Brien and Garner (2001), Shaw (2001), Roaf (2003)	76

\*Codes not mutually exclusive

As noted in Chapter 3, the exploration of physical disability (the first two items in Table 4.5) and support for pupils have been the subject of very few studies set exclusively in secondary schools. Four of the in-depth studies relate to support for pupils with disabilities (Ebersold, 2003; Hemmingsson et al., 2003; Jarvis, 2003; Moran and Abbott, 2002), but, of these, only the Jarvis study is focused solely on secondary schools. This is an area of support work that should be further researched, as is the provision of English as an additional language or bilingual support at secondary school level. We could find no studies of the latter emerging in the systematic map. The only in-depth study that focused on a single curriculum area was that of Chambers and Pearson (2004) on support for the teaching of modern languages.

Research approaches and methods

As with the systematic map, the principal research instruments in the in-depth studies were questionnaire surveys and interviews. Unfortunately, studies often gave very little advice about the analytical categories used to help them reach their conclusions. This was typical of studies in the map and the in-depth review.

**Table 4.6**  
Type of method used to collect perceptions/ views\*

Type of research	Mapped studies (N=168)	In-depth studies (N=17)
Case study	14	4
Questionnaire study	99	8
Interview with stakeholders	89	13
Opinionnaire survey	5	0
Focus group	10	2
Other	52	5

\*Codes not mutually exclusive

Names for teaching assistants

The principal titles given to classroom teaching assistants in the UK are teaching assistant, classroom assistant (CA) and then, less frequently, learning support assistant (LSA), despite Farrell et al.’s (1999) strong argument in favour of the latter. Sometimes, more than one title is used in a study to reflect different roles undertaken by TAs: for example, Farrell et al. (1999) distinguish between LSAs who support for inclusion and general classroom assistants. Table 4.7 presents terms used in the 17 studies.

In the UK, higher level teaching assistant (HLTA) is a recent addition (DfES, 2003) to the labels used, but the term did not feature in in-depth studies

**Table 4.7**  
Terms for teaching assistants\*

Terms used for classroom learning assistants	Number of studies	Studies
Learning support assistants (LSA)	4	Farrell et al. (1999), MENCAP (1999), O’Brien and Garner (2001), Roaf (2003)
Learning supporters	1	Shaw (2001)
Integration assistants	1	Ebersold (2003)
School assistants	1	Hemmingsson et al. (2002)
Support staff	2	Golze (2002), Kerry (2002)
Classroom assistants	3	Bowers (1997), Farrell et al. (1999), Mortimore et al. (1994)
Classroom assistants	4	Chambers and Pearson (2004), Golze (2002), Moran and Abbott (2002), Neill (2002a)
Special needs assistants (SNA)	1	Jerwood (1999)
Associate staff, non-teaching staff; teaching auxiliaries	1	Mortimore et al. (1994)
Support workers (social work trained)	1	Vulliamy and Webb (2003)

\* Codes not mutually exclusive

up to 2005, although the workforce remodelling agenda has featured in other recent studies of how TAs are used in schools in England (Durrant and Kramer, 2005; Thomas et al., 2004; UNISON, 2004).

**4.3 Further details of studies included in the in-depth review**

*Subjects’ voices and perceptions: stakeholder voices*

The stakeholder voices reported in the in-depth studies of teaching assistant contributions reflected the dominance of TA and teacher perceptions in the map. Table 4.8 summarises the voices in both in-depth and mapped studies.

The data extractions revealed in greater detail whose voices had been reported and figures are presented in Table 4.9. Where possible, perceptions were assigned to particular stakeholders. Unfortunately, the reports did not always differentiate their subjects’ voices (for

**Table 4.8**

Stakeholder voices reported

	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Headteachers	Parents	Other
Number of studies in the map (N=168)	122	117	31	57	29	418
Number of in-depth studies (N=17)	12	9	8	6	4	2
Total voices identified	312	1650	816	12	138	13

**Table 4.9**

Numbers of stakeholder in the 17 in-depth

Studies	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Headteachers	Parents	Other
Bowers (1997)			128			
Ebersold (2003)	61	62			51	
Farrell et al. (1999)	135	113	47		35	
Hemmingsson et al. (2003)	7	7	7			
MENCAP (1999)	43	25	7		30	
Moran and Abbott (2002)				2 post-primary		
Mortimore et al (1994)	18	5		9		6 line managers
Neill (2002a)		1345				
O'Brien and Garner (2002)*	11					
Shaw (2001)						
Vulliamy and Webb (2003)*		86	486 (25 interviews)		22	
Jarvis (2003)*			83			
Golze (2002)*	1 (+5 technicians)					
Chambers and Pearson (2004)*	8	7	54			
Jerwood (1999)*	7					
Kerry (2002)*	3		4	1		
Roaf (2003)*	18					
Total	312	1650	816	12	138	13

\* Secondary school only studies

example, Shaw, 2001; Ebersold, 2003; Golze, 2002) leading to uncertainty about whose perceptions were being reported. Hemmingsson et al. (2003) also do not discriminate perceptions from different stakeholders. The asterisked studies in Table 4.9 (\*) are either secondary specific or contain clear differentiation that enabled reviewers to identify secondary-focused perceptions (the latter being Mortimore et al. 1994; O'Brien and Garner, 2001).

Our understanding from the in-depth studies of what TAs do in secondary schools is based on a rather small set of stakeholders, arguably the most

important (pupils) still under-represented despite appearances in Table 4.9. Just seven students found a voice in the MENCAP (1999) study, while Bowers (1997) included the views of 128 secondary pupils in his sample of 713 pupils, but it is not always possible to separate these from the 585 primary pupil voices represented in the same study. Vulliamy and Webb (2003) used a questionnaire to collect the views of 486 students. This was focused on their views about behaviour and exclusion in their school context, not specifically about the effects of the project. Only a small proportion of students in each of the seven schools covered by the research had been involved

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**Table 4.10**

Results of assessment of weight of evidence for each study

	A (Trustworthy in terms of own question)	B (Appropriate design and analysis for this review question)	C (Relevance of focus to review question)	D (Overall weight in relation to review question)
Bowers (1997)	Medium-high	Medium-high	Medium-low	Medium
Chambers and Pearson (2004)*	Medium	Medium-high	Medium	Medium
Ebersold (2003)	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium-low
Farrell et al. (1999)	High	High	Medium	High-medium
Golze (2002)*	Low	Low	Low	Low
Hemmingson et al. (2003)	High	Medium	Low	Medium
Jarvis (2003)*	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Jerwood (1999)*	Low	Low	Low	Low
Kerry (2002)*	Low	Medium	Medium	Low
MENCAP (1999)	Medium	Medium-high	Medium-high	Medium
Moran and Abbott. (2002)	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Mortimore et al. (1994)*	Medium	Medium-low	Medium-low	Medium-low
Neill (2002a)	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
O'Brien and Garner (2001)	Medium	Medium-low	Low	Medium-low
Roaf (2003)*	Medium-low	Low-medium	Medium	Medium-low
Shaw (2001)	Low	Medium	Medium	Low
Vulliamy and Webb (2003)*	Medium-high	Medium	Medium	Medium

\*Secondary school only studies

in the project. 25 support worker caseload pupils were interviewed. As a result, the figure of 816 pupil voices has to be read with some qualification.

Only four clearly reported the views of parents (Ebersold, 2003; Farrell et al., 1999; MENCAP, 1999; Vulliamy and Webb, 2003), the last two perhaps being most informative about parents' views. The MENCAP (1999) study gave voice to 30 parents, as well as 7 pupils. Nevertheless, this analysis suggests that pupils' perceptions and those of parents are relatively under-represented.

Teachers dominated, but at least 1,345 of these were respondents in the Neill (2002a) postal questionnaire study, which is not as rich as others in describing the detail of teaching assistant contributions. The other studies gave voice to just 307 teachers in total.

What is noteworthy is the low number of secondary TAs consulted in each case although TA voices are spread across 12 studies. This difficulty of finding studies about secondary school support work is exemplified by Golze (2003), who has just one clearly identifiable teaching assistant respondent among the TAs investigated. TA voices numbered 312

in the final set of 17 studies.

In the in-depth studies, seven studies had a single set of stakeholders: TAs in O'Brien and Garner (2001), Jerwood (1999) and Roaf (2003); pupils in Bowers (1997) and Jarvis (2003); headteachers in Moran and Abbott (2002); and teachers in Neill (2002a, b). Ten studies had multiple stakeholder respondents and eight sought the views of pupils.

#### *Weight of evidence (WoE)*

Following the procedures outlined in section 2.3, judgements about weights of evidence (WoE) were made of all 17 included studies, together with an overall weight. Secondary school-specific studies are asterisked (\*) for comparison to cross-phase studies.

This table indicates that most studies were clustered in the middle range of weight: eight studies were seen as providing medium weight of evidence, four of medium-low and one of high-medium (13 in total). The lack of specific methodological information and description of the research process led to the low weightings. In total, four studies were given low weight.

Jerwood (1999) and Kerry (2002) offer only limited description of TA contributions. Roaf (2003) and Shaw (2001) offer quite rich description but give limited guidance about their methods and the way their samples were generated (WoE A). As a result, it is not possible to give them more than low or medium-low overall weightings. MENCAP (1999) offers a comprehensive description of the LSA role, but its data collection and analysis methods are only briefly described. Despite the wealth of information, it is not possible to accord higher than medium weightings to the study.

Reviewers found that perceptions were often reported in a generic way, with accounts of what TAs do and how they do it rather thin on detail (WoE C), as in Mortimore et al. (1994) and Ebersold (2003). In addition, judging WoE B was difficult as many studies have perceptions embedded within them, with the extent to which the research is focused on stakeholder perceptions rather than on observations made by researchers hard to determine (e.g. Golze, 2002; Jerwood, 1999). The cross-phase O'Brien and Garner study (2001) contained some specific perceptions about secondary school practice, but these were outweighed by the dominance of primary school case studies. In some cases, perceptions form only part of the study. Vulliamy and Webb (2003) is, on the other hand, a robust, well-designed and very important study. However, the relevance of the work to this review had to be considered medium in overall weight because the focus is on the contributions of social-work trained support workers. Nevertheless, reviewers believe that insights gained from the study are important to our understanding of what TAs can contribute. Indeed, given that studies have suggested that TAs are critical to successful inclusion, skills derived from social work training could be key to improving on current practice in the training of TAs.

The difficulties encountered in finding detailed views studies reflect the dearth of such research about secondary school TA contributions. As a result, the above judgements are not necessarily a reflection on the quality of the study but, in part, a result of the difficulty of finding detailed 'views' studies on the contributions of TAs to pupils' academic and social engagement in mainstream classrooms.

#### 4.4 Synthesis of evidence

Following the constant comparison analysis established for the first review (Cajkler et al., 2006), all perceptions were placed in the following four groupings of TA (see in detail in Appendix 4.2):

1. direct academic and socio-academic contributions to pupils (working with children on learning tasks; promoting independence, etc.)
2. contributions to inclusion (securing integration of learners)
3. stakeholders relations (acting as a link person between stakeholders in communication, feedback and advocacy roles)
4. contributions to teachers (e.g. with routine tasks such as display)

The next sections are devoted to reporting the results of our analysis.

##### 4.4.1 Direct academic and socio-academic contributions to pupils

This was the largest category with more than 30 major contributions listed (see Appendix 4.1). In addition, the views of TAs, teachers and pupils tended to coincide in recognising this contribution. Supporting pupils' learning was seen as a significant TA contribution in primary schools and, despite the varied subject demands of the secondary curriculum, this perception applied equally to secondary schools, with TAs reporting that they engaged in interpreting and communicating teacher instructions and input, adapting pedagogy and mediating input to make it more accessible, helping groups with tasks set by teachers (see Table 4.11).

Help for small groups and individuals with tasks set by the teacher (including practical activities) was described in several studies (Chambers and Pearson, 2004; MENCAP, 1999; O'Brien and Garner, 2001; Shaw, 2001), both cross-phase and secondary-specific. While much of their contribution was targeted at individual assigned children, the general perception was that TAs worked with groups of pupils (Ebersold, 2003; MENCAP, 1999; Moran and Abbott, 2002; Mortimore et al., 1994; Neill, 2002a) and teachers expected them to support other pupils, even when they were assigned to a specific child. An assessment role was also mentioned in some studies but this might be the case of an activity that required just a flick or a tick. Principal contributions are listed in Table 4.11, with secondary school-specific contributions asterisked (\*). All other contributions were reported in both cross-phase and secondary school studies.

Each stakeholder group's perceptions are discussed in the following sections in the following order: pupils, TAs, teachers, parents, and headteachers.

##### *Pupils' perceptions about TAs' academic and socio-academic contributions*

Pupil perceptions are reported in eight studies. They were rather limited, but centred on the teaching assistant being someone to turn to, someone to listen to them and someone who helped the teacher.

Overall, pupils identified the following categories of support, particularly in studies of medium weight as indicated in Table 4.12.

In MENCAP (1999) and Bowers, (1997), TAs were seen as helping pupils in general and as helping pupils with specific needs. Pupils in the MENCAP study

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**Table 4.11**

Academic and socio-academic contributions

Number of voices reporting	Contribution	Number of studies	TAs	Teacher	Pupils	Headteachers	Parents	Unclear
25	Helping pupils in general; mediating learning / curriculum; enhancing curriculum opportunities (oiling the wheels in class)	15	6	4	6	2	2	5
15	Supporting learning; developing children's confidence and ability to learn; encouraging children	12	5	2	3	1	1	3
14	Helping groups with tasks set by teacher (include practical)	8	5	4	1	1	0	3
12	Helping individuals (e.g. with tasks set by teacher)	8	4	3	0	1	1	3
10	Adapting pedagogy to needs of pupils (lessons or materials)	7	2	1	2	1	2	3
9	Promoting independence	7	3	1	1	1	1	2
6	Supporting literacy or language development	4	3	1	0	0	0	2
8	Listening to children	5	3	1	1	0	1	2
8	Helping specific children with needs	8	4	0	1	1	1	1
7	Being someone to turn to / helper	6	1	0	4	1	1	0
6	Providing interaction opportunities in class	3	1	1	0	0	2	2
5	Interpreting (instructions/language/ worksheets)/translate language	5	1	0	1	1	0	2
5	Assessing children's work; contributing to assessment	5	2	1	1	0	0	1
5	Improving / maintaining pupil motivation	5	2	1	1	1	0	0
2	Supporting numeracy / maths	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
1	Post-tutoring (re-enforce teaching)	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
5*	Co-learning with pupils; acting as a pseudo-pupil*	3	2	2	0	0	0	1
4*	Setting good examples; acting as a role model; modelling learning / behaviour*	3	2	1	1	0	0	0
3*	Securing attendance at school exams*	2	2	0	0	1	0	0

5*	Working in one subject area*	4	3	1	0	1	0	0
3*	Securing attendance at school*	2	0	0	1	0	0	0
4*	Supporting all subjects (across the secondary curriculum)*	2	2	0	0	0	0	2
2*	Helping maintain a positive climate for all*	2	1	0	0	0	0	1
2*	Acting as a distraction*	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
1*	Supporting ICT development*	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
1*	Providing support for writing activities*	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1*	Supporting homework / exam preparation*	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
2*	Target setting: suggesting way forward (social, behavioural and academic)	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
1	Promoting independent interaction	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
1*	Acting to identify student potential (being an advocate for pupils)*	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
1	Interpreting instructions (language/ worksheets)	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
1	Checking homework done and understood	1	0	0	1	0	0	0

\*Secondary school only studies

reported that LSAs taught them and also helped them, for example, with music notes, with physical activities on wall-bars and other needs, such as with the tying of shoelaces (MENCAP, 1999). Older pupils in the Bowers study (1997) saw support as individual-specific, with help offered to those who were identified as being somehow different, needing something additional to the provision offered to the rest of the class. A minority of recipients of support felt singled out. Moreover, a few pupils associated a sense of frustration with the support they received (Bowers, 1997, p228). Bowers indicated some secondary school pupils felt that receiving extra help from an additional adult singled them out, and the help could be unnecessary and time wasting. Some of the older pupils were apprehensive about being perceived as 'silly' and 'different' from their peer groups. Bowers (1997) reported the perceptions of 128 secondary pupils (and more than five hundred primary pupils) and made clear that older pupils in 11-16 schools perceived help as pupil-focused and potentially unwelcome.

Despite Bowers (1997) being a cross-phase study, interpreting pupils' perceptions regarding TAs' social and academic contributions was relatively easy since pupil perceptions were generally reported in ways that revealed the age of students. One 13-year old is reported saying the following:

*I think there should be just one teacher in a class. Where there's two that is two of them to nag you instead of one. (Bowers, 1997, p 230)*

Bowers concludes (1997, p 231) that further research could be done to identify what distinguishes classrooms in which support is welcomed and appreciated from those in which negative responses may occur: 'just what discriminates between the classroom environment in which those adults are accepted, welcomed and valued by all students and those in which their presence can be resented, and where it may lead to the creation of real barriers to inclusion' (ibid).

An interpretational contribution was reported in secondary-specific studies by pupils in Chambers and Pearson (2004) and in Jarvis (2003), both medium WoE. The Jarvis study reported the views of 61 deaf and 22 hearing pupils, with hearing-impaired pupils' perceptions recognising the contribution to learning made by TAs:

- supporting their learning and developing children's confidence and ability to learn
- encouraging them
- adapting teaching to their needs

**Table 4.12**

Pupils' perceptions about TAs academic and socio-academic contributions

Pupils' perceptions	WoE D: High/ Medium	WoE D: Medium	WoE D: Low
Helping pupils in general; mediating learning / curriculum; enhancing curriculum opportunities (oiling the wheels in class)		Bowers (1997), Chambers and Pearson (2004)*, Jarvis (2003)*, MENCAP (1999), Vulliamy and Webb (2003)*	Kerry (2002)*
Supporting learning; developing children's confidence and ability to learn; encouraging children		Chambers and Pearson (2004)*, Jarvis (2003)*	Kerry (2002)*
Helping groups with tasks set by teacher (include practical)		Chambers and Pearson (2004)*	
Adapting pedagogy to needs of pupils (lessons or materials)		Jarvis (2003)*, MENCAP (1999)	
Promoting independence	Farrell et al. (1999) (Inference)		
Helping specific children with needs		Bowers (1997)	
Listening to children		Vulliamy and Webb, (2003)*	
Being someone to turn to / helper	Farrell et al. (1999)	MENCAP (1999), Vulliamy and Webb, (2003)*	Kerry (2002)*
Assessing children's work / contributing to assessment		Chambers and Pearson (2004)*	
Interpreting (instructions/language/ worksheets) translating language		Jarvis (2003)*	
Improving / maintaining pupil motivation			Kerry (2002)*
Setting good examples: acting as role model; modelling learning / behaviour*		Chambers and Pearson (2004)*	
Securing attendance at school*		Vulliamy and Webb (2003)*	
Acting as a distraction*		Chambers and Pearson (2004) *	
Providing support for writing activities*		Jarvis (2003)*	
Target setting: suggesting way forward (social, behavioural and academic)		Vulliamy and Webb (2003)*	

\*Secondary school only studies

- helping pupils and mediating the curriculum
- interpreting instructions and worksheets

The feedback was not all positive: 'Strong opinions were expressed by deaf pupils about their in-class support. They were not always clear about the status of the people involved, whether they were teachers, TAs (sometimes referred to as LSAs) or communication support workers, but they were clear about what they found helpful or unhelpful about the support they (TAs) gave' (Jarvis, 2003, p 166). Hearing-impaired pupils (61 consulted in the research) reported difficulties with some mainstream lessons where support was not available (e.g. French lessons). They reported that TAs:

- repeated or signed teacher input
- helped interpret recorded speech
- made sure that pupils understood
- kept pupils on task

- checked work

However, they also made comments about life being more peaceful without TAs. While some pupils said support was only given when requested, others complained of being unnecessarily prodded and over-supported. The study concludes that it had demonstrated the importance of listening to the views of pupils about provision. In a study of secondary school language learning, Chambers and Pearson (2004) conducted interviews with groups of four to six pupils. They report that pupils see the TA as:

- contributing to the assessment of their work
- helping pupils as general mediators of learning/ curriculum
- helping small groups with tasks set by the teacher
- encouraging them and supporting their learning and developing their confidence and ability to learn

- being someone to turn to / helper
- acting as a model of learning and as a co-learner with pupils

The authors concluded that pupils shared positive views of the presence of additional adults and that they added value in classrooms. However, the picture was not entirely positive as there were some pupils who found their presence to be a distraction, as in the Jarvis study.

The study with highest weight, Farrell et al. (1999), in common with the MENCAP study (1999), reported pupils as seeing the TA as someone to turn to for help and support in small groups or individually. However, they need to know when to intervene and when to leave the pupil to work independently (MENCAP, 1999, p 50). Hemmingsson et al. (2003) identified a range of socio-academic contributions, including supporting learning, building pupils' confidence, adapting pedagogy to the needs of pupils, being some to turn to, and helping individuals and groups, but they did not differentiate the responses by stakeholder. So, the perceptions of pupils are not separated from those of teachers and TAs.

Pupils in Vulliamy and Webb (2003) recognised the contribution made to learning despite the fact that their support workers did not have the same background as the rest of the TAs covered by the other 15 studies. They were trained in social work. The focus in this study was on the encouragement of disaffected pupils. The pupils interviewed welcomed the 'listening/being someone to turn to' contribution made by support workers.

Kerry (2002), a study accorded low WoE, interviewed four year 10/11 students who reported that assistants were engaged in supporting their learning and developing their confidence and ability to learn. TAs were there to encourage them, adapt teaching to their needs; help in general, mediate the curriculum, and be someone to turn to and listen to them.

To conclude, pupils identified a range of ways in which TAs support their learning in classrooms. Pupils saw TA support in relation to learning and curriculum, assisting group work, assessment and increasing their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils also valued TAs as supporters accessible to them, as adults who had time to listen to their voices. Distinguishing younger and older pupils' voices was not straightforward, however. Younger pupils tended to associate more generic roles of support, while older pupils viewed support as being directed at those who need additional help, which carried the dangers of negative perceptions of self in the eyes of peer groups. Pupils' views in this study also highlighted the concern at TAs being over supportive and the ways in which this unsettle their school experiences. This can have damaging effects and we could find no UK studies on this issue. Studies have

begun to appear elsewhere, particularly the USA.

#### *TAs' perceptions about TAs' academic and socio-academic contributions*

The MENCAP research team (1999, section 3.1.3) reported that 'a surprising number of comments were made about activities that fell into the general categories of teaching and promoting learning. It was clear that LSAs felt that both of these were an important part of the job.' A range of studies with different WoEs supported this perception held by TAs. With the exception of four studies (Chambers and Pearson, 2004; Farrell et al., 1999; MENCAP, 1999; Vulliamy and Webb, 2003), the remaining 11 studies were of low WoE (Golze, 2002; Jerwood, 1999; Shaw, 2001) or medium-low WoE (Ebersold, 2003; Mortimore et al., \* 1994; O'Brien and Garner, 2001; Roaf, \* 2003).

The identification of the TA with the pupils' learning was a feature that came across in secondary school only studies (for example, Chambers and Pearson, 2004; Golze, 2002; Roaf, 2003). Golze (2002), a study accorded low WoE, identified the setting of good examples and the TA role in helping and guiding pupils. TAs complained of being patronised and talked down to, especially by younger staff, who were perhaps not sufficiently aware of the skills and expertise of TAs. Secondary school TAs placed a lot of emphasis on being a role model, especially noted in Chambers and Pearson (2004), in which they described themselves as co-learners with pupils, receiving teacher input and then learning it with pupils to allow them to access it collectively, a form of scaffolding. Thus, they encouraged pupils to engage in, and respond to, the challenges of the mainstream classroom.

Promoting independence was a perception predominantly held by TAs in two studies judged to be medium WoE (Chambers and Pearson, 2004; MENCAP, 1999) and two medium-low WoE studies (Ebersold, 2003; O'Brien and Garner, 2001) and often bound up with promoting self-esteem and motivation. TAs in the study of Ebersold (2003) saw it as their responsibility to facilitate the child's autonomy and participation within the classroom, as did TAs in the MENCAP study (1999). However, this was only reported in one exclusively secondary school study (Chambers and Pearson, 2004) on support for foreign language learning. Hemmingsson et al. (2003) also reported the perception in a general way, without naming the stakeholders who held the view.

Supporting learners was among the most significant contributions reported by TAs (in six medium-low or low WoE studies: Ebersold, 2003; Golze, 2002; Mortimore et al., 1994; O'Brien and Garner, 2001; Roaf, 2003; Shaw, 2001), as they mediated learning for small groups. How they did this was not always made very clear, but it involved listening to pupils and giving appropriate attention and interest to their work (i.e. maintaining pupils' interest helps to

**Table 4.13**

TAs' perceptions about TAs' academic and socio-academic contributions

TAs' perceptions	Studies			
	WoE D: High/Medium	WoE D: Medium	WoE D: Medium/Low	WoE D: Low
Helping pupils in general; mediating learning / curriculum; enhancing curriculum opportunities (oiling the wheels in class)		MENCAP (1999)	Ebersold (2003), Mortimore et al.* (1994), O'Brien and Garner (2001), Roaf* (2003)	Jerwood* (1999); Golze* (2002)
Supporting learning; developing children's confidence and ability to learn; encouraging children			Ebersold (2003), Mortimore et al.* (1994). O'Brien and Garner (2001). Roaf* (2003)	Golze* (2002); Shaw (2001)
Helping groups with tasks set by teacher (include practical)	Farrell et al. (1999)	MENCAP (1999)	Ebersold (2003), Mortimore et al.* (1994)	Shaw (2001)
Helping individuals (e.g. with tasks set by teacher)	Farrell et al. (1999)	MENCAP (1999)	Ebersold (2003), Mortimore et al.* (1994)	
Adapting pedagogy to needs of pupils (lessons or materials)	Farrell et al. (1999)	MENCAP (1999)		
Promoting independence		Chambers and Pearson* (2004); MENCAP (1999)	Ebersold (2003), O'Brien and Garner (2001)	
Listening to children			Mortimore et al.* (1994), O'Brien and Garner (2001), Roaf* (2003)	
Helping specific children with needs	Farrell et al. (1999)	MENCAP (1999)	Roaf* (2003)	
Being someone to turn to / helper			Roaf* (2003)	
Supporting literacy or language development	Farrell et al. (1999)		Mortimore et al.* (1994); O'Brien and Garner (2001)	
Providing interaction opportunities in class				
Interpreting (instructions/language/ worksheets)/ translate language		MENCAP (1999)	Ebersold (2003), O'Brien and Garner (2001), Mortimore et al.* (1994)	
Assessing children work; contributing to assessment			Mortimore et al.* (1994)	Jerwood* (1999)
Improving / maintaining of pupil motivation			Golze* (2002), Roaf* (2003)	Kerry (2002)
Working in one subject area*				Jerwood* (1999); Kerry (2002)
Co-learning with pupils; acting as a pseudo-pupil*		Chambers and Pearson* (2004)	O'Brien and Garner (2001), Roaf* (2003)	
Setting good examples; acting as a role model; modelling learning / behaviour*			Roaf* (2003)	Golze* (2002)

Supporting all subjects (across the secondary curriculum)*		Chambers and Pearson* (2004), MENCAP (1999)	Roaf* (2003)	
Securing attendance at school exams*		Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)		
Securing attendance at school		Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)		
Supporting numeracy / maths			Roaf* (2003)	
Helping maintain a positive climate for all*			Roaf* (2003)	Golze* (2002)
Supporting ICT development*			Mortimore et al.* (1994)	
Post-tutoring (re-enforce teaching)			O'Brien and Garner (2001)	
Supporting homework / exam preparation*		Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)		
Promoting independent interaction		MENCAP (1999)		
Target setting with pupils; suggesting ways forward (social, behavioural and academic)*		Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)		
Acting to identify student potential (being an advocate for pupils)*			Roaf* (2003)	

\*Secondary school only studies

keep them on task). TAs spent most of their working time on this contribution.

In summary, TAs viewed themselves as important contributors to pupils' social and academic engagement. This mainly involved providing pupils with help and guidance, promoting their self-esteem and maintaining pupil motivation, promoting pupil independence, and listening to pupils' voices and mediating learning for small groups. Secondary school TAs viewed themselves as being role models and co-learners with pupils. These conclusions suggest that TAs viewed their functions as a form of scaffolding by creating an accessible learning environment, increasing pupils' opportunities for engagement in classrooms tasks, and developing their ability to become independent learners. However, there was very little detail about how they did this in practice, a weakness that has implications to be discussed in Chapter 5.

#### *Teachers' perceptions about TAs' academic and socio-academic contributions*

Teachers recognised the contributions made by TAs to supporting learning, but did not describe socio-academic contributions in the same numbers of studies as TAs, as a comparison of tables 4.13 and 4.14 would indicate. TAs listed 28 items that would categorise as socio-academic contributions; teachers listed 16. Nevertheless, there was broad recognition of the importance of TA contributions. Table 4.14 shows how teacher perceptions of socio-academic

contributions were clustered.

Teacher respondents in Mortimore et al. (1994) saw that secondary TAs provided additional support to pupils and helped keep them on task. In an 11-18 comprehensive 'teachers consider that Associate Staff support improves their own attitude, motivation and ability to meet the differing needs of students' (1994, p 102). From teachers and TA responses and from classroom observations, MENCAP (1999, section 3.1.1) concluded that LSAs teach and promote learning by explaining and adapting work, helping to give pupils access to lessons: for example, prompting and encouraging, waiting for pupils' responses and interpreting them where necessary, and supporting pupils to meet individual targets or particular aspects of the National Curriculum.

The results suggest that teachers welcome and value TA support in their classrooms. However, they appeared to recognise a narrower range of descriptions of this type of support when compared with TAs. The most common teachers' perceptions of TAs' social-academic contributions involved helping group work, supporting individual learning needs in relation to learning tasks, and providing interaction opportunities in the class. In secondary school contexts, the TA role also involved keeping pupils on tasks, which in turn helped teachers to improve their own motivation and attitude, and capacity to meet diverse pupil needs.

**Table 4.14**

Teachers' perceptions about TAs' academic and socio-academic contributions

Teachers' perception	Studies			
	WoE High/ medium	WoE Medium	WoE Medium/ low	WoE Low
Helping pupils in general; mediating learning / curriculum; enhancing curriculum opportunities (oiling the wheels in class)		MENCAP (1999)	Mortimore et al.* (1994)	
Supporting learning; developing children's confidence and ability to learn; encouraging children		Hemmingsson et al. (2003)	Ebersold (2003)	
Helping groups with tasks set by teacher (include practical)		MENCAP (1999), Moran and Abbott (2002), Neill (2002a)	Ebersold (2003), Mortimore et al.* (1994)	
Helping individuals (e.g. with tasks set by teacher)		Hemmingsson et al. (2003), MENCAP (1999), Neill (2002a)	Ebersold (2003), Mortimore et al.* (1994)	
Adapting pedagogy to needs of pupils (lessons or materials)	Farrell et al. (1999)	Hemmingsson et al. (2003)	Ebersold (2003)	
Promoting independence		MENCAP (1999)	Ebersold (2003)	
Listening to children			Mortimore et al.* (1994)	
Supporting literacy or language development		Neill (2002a)		
Providing interaction opportunities in class		Hemmingsson et al. (2003), MENCAP (1999)	Mortimore et al.* (1994)	
Interpreting (instructions/language/ worksheets)/translate language		Neill (2002a)		
Assessing children work/Contributing to assessment		Neill (2002a)	Mortimore et al.* (1994)	
Improving/ maintaining of pupil motivation			Ebersold (2003)	
Co-learning with pupils; acting as a pseudo-pupil*		Chambers and Pearson (2004)		
Setting good examples; acting as a role* model; modelling learning/behaviour		Chambers and Pearson (2004)		
Supporting numeracy/maths		Neill (2002a)		
Acting as a distraction*				Golze* (2002)

\*Secondary school only studies

#### *Parents' perceptions about TAs' academic and socio-academic contributions*

Two studies reporting parent perceptions were of medium WoE, namely Vulliamy and Webb (2003) and MENCAP (1999). Farrell et al. (1999), with high-medium WoE, and the medium-low Ebersold (2003) were the only other papers to report parent perspectives. Parents viewed TA contributions very positively, although parents were often unclear just what the support staff did. Both MENCAP (1999) and Farrell et al. (1999) reported that parents were often unsure just how LSAs worked and what exactly their contributions were. Nevertheless, they appeared to have faith that the assistants were crucial to their children's education. Farrell et al. (1999, p 22) report two parents believing that

the LSAs supporting their children were qualified teachers with 'specialist training to work with children similar to their own'. The researchers ascribed this misconception to a failure by the schools/LEAs to communicate accurately and effectively with parents. It is not possible to be sure that the parents were of secondary school children in this case, but the misconception has important implications for all sectors with regard to explaining provision to parents. Definite parent perceptions were few in number but included those shown in Table 4.15.

Parents in Vulliamy and Webb (2003, p 280) were reported as knowing that support workers helped their children cope with school. They were, however, uncertain just what the support workers

**Table 4.15**

Parents' perceptions about TAs' academic and socio-academic contributions

Parents' perceptions	Studies		
	High-medium	Medium	Medium-low
Helping pupils in general; mediating learning/ curriculum; enhancing curriculum opportunities (oiling the wheels in class)		Supporting homework / exam preparation*	
Supporting learning; developing children's confidence and ability to learn; encouraging children	Supporting homework / exam preparation*		
Helping individuals (e.g. with tasks set by teacher)	Farrell et al. (1999)		
Adapting pedagogy to needs of pupils (lessons or materials)		MENCAP (1999), Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)	Ebersold (2003)
Promoting independence	Farrell et al. (1999)	MENCAP (1999)	
Helping specific children with needs		MENCAP (1999)	
Listening to children		Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)	
Being someone to turn to / helper		Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)	
Supporting homework / exam preparation*		Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)	
Checking homework understood and done*		Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)	

\*Secondary school only studies

**Table 4.16**

Headteacher perceptions about TAs' academic and socio-academic to pupil contributions

Headteachers' perceptions	Studies			
	High-medium WoE	Medium WoE	Medium-low WoE	Low WoE
Supporting learning; developing children's confidence and ability to learn; encouraging children		Moran and Abbott (2002)		
Helping groups with tasks set by the teacher (including practical activities)		Moran and Abbott (2002)		
Helping individuals (including with tasks set by the teacher)		Moran and Abbott (2002)		
Adapting pedagogy to needs of pupils (including Lessons or materials), enhancing curriculum opportunities (oiling the wheels in class)	Farrell et al. (1999)	Moran and Abbott (2002)	Mortimore et al.* (1994)	
Promoting independence		Moran and Abbott (2002)		
Helping specific children with needs		Moran and Abbott (2002)		
Being someone to turn to / helper		Moran and Abbott (2002)		
Interpreting (instructions/language/ worksheets) translating language		Moran and Abbott (2002)		
Improving / maintaining pupil motivation		Moran and Abbott (2002)		
Working in one subject area*				Kerry (2003)
Securing attendance at school exams*				Kerry (2003)

\*Secondary school only studies

did, although mention was made about the bottom four categories in Table 4.15.

In summary, parents' perceptions appeared to be very positive. However, they were not clear about the TAs' specific contributions, although they recognised that contributions involved helping pupils in general, supporting pupils' with specific needs, developing pupils' confidence and ability to learn (see Table 4.15 for a full list). It was not possible to distinguish the views for primary and secondary school pupils' parents.

#### *Headteacher perceptions about TAs' academic and socio-academic contributions*

Headteacher perceptions were only identified in four studies (Farrell et al., 1999; Kerry, 2002; Moran and Abbott, 2002; Mortimore et al., 1994). The medium WoE Moran and Abbott (2002), which focuses exclusively on the voices of headteachers, dominate the contributions presented in Table 4.16.

Headteachers in Moran and Abbott (2002) saw it as their responsibility to facilitate the child's autonomy and participation within the classroom. Farrell et al. (1999) interviewed 19 heads from a range of schools who reported that they valued the work of TAs. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to isolate secondary school voices in the report, so its inclusion in the table above depends on inference rather than explicit reference.

From the evidence in the four studies reported above it appears that headteachers recognised the contributions of TAs as significant educational work. They were also able to identify a broad range of ways in which TAs support pupils' social and academic engagement. This ranged from general support to specific in-class help such as interpretation of instructions and language.

#### *Conclusion*

To conclude this section, the MENCAP study (1999) provides a useful summary of LSA contributions in support of pupils with SLD/PMLD, which give rise to some important implications (to be discussed in Chapter 5):

- More LSAs were working with groups of pupils rather than individuals, finding this a more effective way of promoting integration and relationships between pupils.
- Some LSAs were effectively carrying out teaching duties, with pupils having little access to a qualified teacher in mainstream classrooms.
- Many LSAs felt that their role in the classroom was not well clarified, particularly with regard to the limits of their responsibility.
- Many LSAs play a significant part in managing the inclusion process.

However, there was a great deal of variation in the extent to which LSAs were able to take part in planning lessons and recording pupils' progress (1999, p 1), an anxiety expressed in several reports.

From the study results, TA responses were enthusiastic and tended to focus on their direct contributions to learners, while acknowledging their support role for teachers. Clearly, they believed that they made significant contributions to pupil engagement as illustrated above. Teachers made fewer mentions of such contributions but their perceptions were generally positive, welcoming the support and especially the flexibility that the presence of an additional adult gave them, although one teacher complained of having her attention diverted by the needs of the TA (Jarvis, 2003). Teachers (and headteachers) generally reported that TAs were very valuable to them as resources and as support for their work. Parents seemed to know little about teaching assistant contributions in this domain.

#### **4.4.2 Contributions to inclusion**

Inclusion is an important contribution that was recognised in the secondary school studies reviewed (notably Jarvis, 2003; Roaf, 2003; Vulliamy and Webb, 2003) and also in the MENCAP study (1999) as well as other cross-phase studies (Ebersold, 2003; Farrell et al., 1999; Shaw, 2001). Table 4.17 illustrates the breakdown of studies that reported these perceptions.

Although some perceptions of good practice were reported (for example, in MENCAP, 1999), the studies did not report in detail exactly what the TAs did to support or impede inclusion. The general contributions towards inclusion focused on managing pupil behaviour, mediating social interaction, and opening communication channels between teachers and pupils, as well as supporting pupils academically for constructive engagement in educational processes.

Hemmingsson et al. (2002) suggested that the presence of the TA (in what they called the help-teacher assistant role) could act to decrease communication by the pupil with the teacher. Such perceptions suggest that TAs could possibly offer a kind of academic and social buffer when TAs were over-protective, thereby removing 'pupils' learning challenges' (Moran and Abbott, 2002, p 168).

Each stakeholder group's perceptions are discussed in the following sections, in the following order: pupils, TAs, teachers, parents, and headteachers.

#### *Pupils' perceptions about TAs' contributions to inclusion*

There were four medium WoE studies (Bowers, 1997; Jarvis, 2003; MENCAP, 1999; Vulliamy and Webb, 2003) reporting pupil perceptions on contributions to inclusion, one high-medium (Farrell et al., 1999) and

**Table 4.17**  
Contributions to inclusion

Number of times perceptions coded	Contributions perceived	Number of studies	TA	Teacher	Pupils	Parents	Head-teachers	Unclear
21	Securing inclusion / overseeing integration	11	6	4	2	4	2	3
11	Managing behaviour	7	1	3	2	1	1	3
10	Mediating social interaction, with peers (including advice about impairment); facilitating social interaction	6	5	2	0	1	0	2
9	Shielding children from learning challenges and integrating	6	2	1	2	0	2	2
7	Mentoring about personal problems *	3	2	1	2	1	0	1
5	Catering for pastoral needs	4	1	1	1	1	0	2
3	Being a key to pupil attendance*	3	2	0	1	0	0	0
1	Interfering with peer group relationships*	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
1	Empathising with pupils from unsupportive backgrounds*	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
1	Giving opportunities to children that were misunderstood by teachers*	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
1	Encouraging independent interaction	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
2	Acting as a distraction	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
1	Offering pastoral care (caring for pastoral needs)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
1	Understanding students' apprehensions and fears*	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
3	Bridging between teacher and pupil	3	0	3	0	0	0	0

\*Secondary school only studies

**Table 4.18**  
Pupils' perceptions about contributions to inclusion

Pupil's perception	Studies		
	High-medium WoE	Medium WoE	Low WoE
Securing inclusion / overseeing integration		Jarvis (2003)*, Vulliamy and Webb (2003)*	
Managing behaviour		Bowers (1997), Vulliamy and Webb (2003)*	
Shielding children from learning challenges and integrating	Farrell et al. (1999)	Bowers (1997)	
Mentoring about personal problems*		Vulliamy and Webb (2003)*	Kerry (2002)*
Interfering with peer group relationships*		Jarvis (2003)*	
Offering pastoral care (caring for pastoral needs)		MENCAP (1999)	

\*Secondary school only studies

one low WoE (Kerry, 2002). As most evidence comes from the medium WoE studies, these will be the focus of studies here.

Direct comments by pupils about inclusion were few in number and included some expressions of concern about not wishing to be singled out or to be distracted from interaction with their peers, even interfering in peer group relationships (Jarvis, 2003).

Bowers (1997) reported pupils' view that TAs had a behaviour management role, but indirectly it appeared that some pupils were worried about being singled out for special support. Pupils in the study by Jarvis (2003) recognised that TAs contributed to inclusion, while Vulliamy and Webb's support workers were seen as a kind of lifeline that helped to secure their more regular attendance in school. Pupils in Vulliamy and Webb (2003) acknowledged both the behaviour management contribution and the activities that support workers engaged in to integrate or re-integrate pupils into school. There were only two exceptions to this. Two pupils were negative, one describing the support worker as a 'nosy neighbour or a nosy social worker', the other argued that the support worker dragged things up from the past (2003, p 280). The seven students in the MENCAP study (1999) did not report negative views.

The study with the highest WoE, Farrell et al. (1999), reported the perception (section 3.3, 19) that inclusion practices might cause embarrassment in some pupils and pupils wanted support to be given in as non-intrusive a way as possible, welcoming the support but preferring not to have their need highlighted. Farrell et al. (1999) found that strategies that gave 'space and distance to pupils' were particularly important:

Many students in secondary schools were particularly articulate in expressing their preference for this way of working. Where they had been consulted on such matters (something that in itself is an important and helpful strategy), this seemed to have facilitated the creation of mutual acceptance as to the forms of support that were most acceptable. Usually these involved approaches within which help was available to students when it was really needed, but without a sense of constant presence, cutting down opportunities for discussion with peers, or the teacher. (Farrell, 1999, p 50)

The medium WoE Bowers study (1997) would appear to provide support for Farrell et al. (1999). Bowers suggests that negative responses appeared to come from children in the upper age range (1997, p 227). Also, at the secondary level, where a lower proportion of children received support, there were more negative attributions to peers (ibid, p 228). These pupils were afraid of being perceived as 'silly', 'different' from their peers. Also, some secondary pupils associated a sense of frustration with the support provided. They thought that this was not actually needed and it was a waste of time.

For an increasing proportion of older students, Bowers suggested the following:

*Any help was pupil focused. The objects of the provision of additional support were, for them, students who for one reason or another they identified as needing something which was different from or additional to that which the bulk of students in the class received. (Bowers, 1997, p 229)*

Most of the pupils receiving support in Bowers (1997) valued the assistance. Nevertheless consistent responses from a minority reported support as somehow singling a student out as different. While the method of reporting does not mean that it is always possible accurately to disentangle which findings arise from which age group of children responding, the quotations from Bowers (1997) would appear to indicate that older children have rather more negative views of the support, with secondary aged pupils indicating that they felt that receiving help from an additional adult singled them out, and that the help could be unnecessary and time wasting. This is discussed further later.

From the pupils' comments, it could be suggested that an important TA contribution to inclusion is an understanding of pupils' personal problems, feelings and improving pupils' abilities to get along with other pupils (Kerry, 2002). TAs appeared to provide a caring atmosphere for pupils in which opportunities are given to pupils that allow them to engage in activities according to their particular level of need. Kerry's study is of low WoE, but it mentions the TAs' pastoral and attendance-related work. However, in-class support was not always viewed positively, in particular in the eyes of older pupils, due to the risk of being stigmatised as someone with additional needs.

#### *TAs' perceptions about TA's contributions to inclusion*

Shaw (2001) reported how supporters described their inclusive function mainly in relation to 'easing the way for pupils and encouraging them through difficulties' (p 7), but this study is of low WoE. Two medium-low studies, Ebersold (2003), and O'Brien and Garner (2001), highlighted perceptions about the facilitation of interactions between pupils in class. TAs reported that they promote independence, but this was only reflected by two other sets of stakeholders (by headteachers in Moran and Abbott (2002), the other in Ebersold (2003), citing teachers).

TAs reported their contribution to inclusion in a number of studies, as described in Table 4.19.

Farrell et al. (1999), which is rated high in terms of research design and weight of evidence (WoE A), reported that TAs believed they were 'making a genuine contribution towards helping pupils with special needs' (p 23). There was little emphasis on behaviour management, with the exception of

**Table 4.19**

TAs' perceptions on TAs' contributions to inclusion

TAs' perceptions	Studies			
	High-medium WoE	Medium WoE	Medium-low WoE	Low WoE
Securing inclusion / overseeing integration	Farrell et al. (1999)	MENCAP (1999)	Chambers and Pearson* (2004)	
Managing behaviour		Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)	Roaf* (2003)	
Mediating social interaction, with peers (including advice about impairment); acting as advocate for pupil acceptance in class		Chambers and Pearson* (2004), Hemmingsson et al. (2003), MENCAP (1999)	Ebersold (2003), Roaf* (2003)	
Shielding children from learning challenges and integrating		Chambers and Pearson* (2004)		Shaw (2001)
Mentoring about personal problems			Roaf* (2003)	Kerry* (2002)
Catering for pastoral needs		MENCAP (1999)	Roaf* (2003)	
Being the key to attendance*			Roaf* (2003)	Kerry* (2002)
Empathising with pupils from unsupportive backgrounds*				Kerry* (2002)
Giving opportunities to children that were misunderstood by teachers*			Roaf* (2003)	
Understanding student apprehensions and fears *			Roaf* (2003)	
Encouraging independent interaction		MENCAP (1999)		
Acting as a distraction		Chambers and Pearson* (2004)		

\*Secondary school only studies

the medium WoE Vulliamy and Webb (2003) and medium-low Roaf (2003) studies. More was made of TA contributions to inclusion and mediating social interactions.

Shaw (2001, WoE: low) reported that learning supporters in her study saw dangers in 'pupils becoming overly dependent on one adult' (p 16). Flexible rotation of TAs in support of children might act as a safeguard against this, but then parents expressed concern that responding to a range of different assistants might be too much for children with 'high level support needs' (ibid). The much more reliable paper by Chambers and Pearson (2004, medium WoE) mentions that TAs can be distraction rather than an aide. At secondary level, the decision to support in a faculty or across the curriculum is an important one, especially the effects on the pupils of having one or several TAs with whom pupils need to relate. Patterns of organisation need further research.

There was evidence that TAs were aware of the possibility of creating or prolonging dependence. The LSAs in MENCAP (1999) appeared keenly aware of the need to promote independent interaction and independence

The six studies in Table 4.19 suggest that TAs believed that they made a significant contribution to pupils' inclusion. Their claims suggested that they achieved this by helping to ease the difficulties that stand in the way of pupils engaging in classroom learning. This was achieved by maximising opportunities for pupils' purposeful and constructive social and academic participation in classrooms, mainly by mediating social interactions (see Table 4.19 for a detailed description of activities). TAs also appeared to be aware of the concerns regarding over-supporting and shielding them from learning challenges, which was also identified by pupils. These risks may constitute a barrier for achieving inclusion by increasing pupils' dependency on the additional support.

#### *Teachers' perceptions about TAs' contributions to inclusion*

In five medium WoE studies (Chambers and Pearson, 2004; Hemmingsson et al., 2002; MENCAP, 1999; Neill, 2002a; Vulliamy and Webb, 2003), there was clear recognition by teachers that TAs contributed to inclusion. In Vulliamy and Webb (2003), teachers (and parents) acknowledged the bridging role performed by support workers in bringing together teachers and parents for discussions. Teachers

**Table 4.20**

Teacher perceptions on TAs' contributions to inclusion

Teachers' perception	Studies		
	Medium WoE	Medium-low WoW	Low WoE
Securing inclusion / overseeing integration	Hemmingsson et al. (2002), MENCAP (1999), Neill (2002a), Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)	Ebersold (2003)	
Managing behaviour	Neill (2002a), Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)		
Shielding children from learning challenges and integrating	Chambers and Pearson* (2004), Hemmingsson et al. (2002)		
Mentoring about personal problems			Kerry (2002)
Catering for pastoral needs	Hemmingsson et al. (2002), Neill (2002a)		
Empathising with pupils from unsupportive backgrounds*			Kerry (2002)
Mediating social interaction, with peers (including advice about impairment); acting as advocate for pupil acceptance in class (teachers' perception not reported on this coding)	Hemmingsson et al. (2002)	Ebersold (2003)	
Bridging between teacher and pupil	Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)	Ebersold (2003), Mortimore et al.* (1994)	

\*Secondary school only studies

viewed the project very positively as support workers 'were valued for their ability to build good relationships with pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties' (2003, p 281). The success of support workers in Vulliamy and Webb merits wide attention as we seek to implement more integrated approaches to tackling disaffection in children following the introduction of integrated children's services, following the introduction of the Children's Act (2004).

MENCAP (1999, WoE D: medium) concluded from teacher and LSA responses that LSAs promoted inclusion by 'helping relationships, for example by encouraging interaction among pupils and interpreting pupils' attempts to communicate; encouraging independent interaction, for example by watching from a distance, withdrawing when they can' (section 3.1.1). Teacher perceptions were relatively difficult to find in this category, but are summarised in Table 4.20. These perceptions were supported by studies of lower weight (Ebersold, 2003; Kerry, 2002; Mortimore et al. 1994), but detail is lacking.

In summary, while teachers showed an apparent acknowledgment of TAs' role in relation to supporting inclusion, disentangling the description of how they actually achieved this was rather difficult. In teachers' eyes, the extent to which TAs supported inclusion was related to their capacity for connecting school and home, and encouraging positive interactions between pupils. Furthermore, teachers recognised that TAs showed awareness and understanding of pupils' difficulties, especially for the ones who came from disadvantaged backgrounds. Teachers' views reported here suggest

that TAs helped pupils by empathising with them and working together in ways that enabled them to get access to experiences that would help them to develop and improve abilities to engage in appropriate interactions with other pupils.

#### *Parents' perceptions about TAs' contributions to inclusion*

Disentangling the voices in relation to support for educational inclusion was a challenging task. Vulliamy and Webb (2003, WoE D: medium) reported that support workers were valued by parents and pupils for their 'independence, accessibility and availability, skill in developing trusting relationships and sympathetic constructive advice on problems' (p 284). They believed, with teachers, that 'it was the independence and neutrality of support workers, who were perceived as knowing all about school rules and expectations but not instrumental in upholding them, that was a major factor contributing to their successful work with pupils and families' (ibid, p 284). The support workers also fulfilled a role in reducing truanting and parents knew that they accompanied pupils to lessons. The conciliatory role fulfilled by support workers was especially welcomed by parents who appreciated the way they helped to mediate relationships following confrontations between teachers and pupils (ibid, p 283). What is significant in this is that these support workers were perceived by parents to be neutral.

Parents' views are few but they believe that TAs make the following important contributions. Higher weighted studies, notably MENCAP (1999) and Farrell et al. (1999), reported that parents were often unaware of what LSAs actually did. This uncertainty

**Table 4.21**  
Parents' perceptions on TAs' contributions to inclusion

Parents' perception	Studies		
	High-medium WoE	Medium WoE	Medium-low WoE
Securing inclusion / overseeing integration	Farrell et al. (1999)	MENCAP (1999), Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)	Ebersold (2003)
Managing behaviour	Farrell et al. (1999)	Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)	
Mediating social interaction, with peers (including advice about impairment); acting as advocate for pupil acceptance in class		Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)	Ebersold (2003)
Mentoring about personal problems		Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)	Ebersold (2003)
Catering for pastoral needs		MENCAP (1999)	
Being a key to pupil attendance*		Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)	

\*Secondary school only studies

**Table 4.22**  
Headteachers' perceptions on TAs' contributions to inclusion

Headteachers' perception	Studies		
	High-medium WoE	Medium WoE	Medium-low WoE
Securing inclusion / overseeing integration	Farrell et al. (1999)	Moran and Abbott (2002)	
Managing behaviour			Mortimore et al.* (1994)
Shielding children from learning challenges and integrating		Moran and Abbott (2002)	Mortimore et al.* (1994)

\*Secondary school only studies

about their contributions was echoed in the study of support workers by Vulliamy and Webb (2003).

Ebersold's paper (2003) is in parts difficult to follow, this being one reason for its relatively low WoE, but it identifies three contributions reported by parents, who recognised the importance of the integration assistant in the inclusion process. Parents recognised a range of ways in which TAs were supporting educational inclusion. While parents were not always clear what specifically TAs did, they tended to associate TAs' role in relation to inclusion with the TAs' caring, conciliatory and behaviour management roles, such as mentoring pupils' problems and helping pupils to interact positively with other pupils. Parents also appeared to be pleased with support workers' role in reducing school truancy (Vulliamy and Webb, 2003).

#### *Headteachers' perceptions about TAs' contributions to inclusion*

Headteachers confirmed the crucial contributions made by TAs to including pupils, identifying the contributions shown in Table 4.22 in particular.

There were very few perceptions from headteachers, with only 12 voices in total. They

reported a relatively narrow range of functions in describing contributions to inclusion, when compared with contributions to social and academic engagement. However, they valued TA support in relation to securing inclusion. This is reflected in their perceptions of contributions to behaviour management, their emphasis on mediating relationships and care for pupils.

#### *Conclusion*

With regard to inclusion, a range of papers suggests that TAs need to know when to offer individual support to particular pupils and when to act as a general resource, to avoid in-class segregation or marginalisation of included pupils. This contribution presupposes engagement with, and understanding of, the aims, content, stages and outcomes of each lesson. Perceived intrusiveness of TAs was a feature noted in the map (e.g. Broer et al., 2005) and in the review of primary school teaching assistant contributions (Cajkler et al., 2006). In the in-depth review, Hemmingsson et al. (2003) found evidence from their observations of pupils who might avoid support if it threatened in any way their opportunities for social participation. They concluded that decisions about support for pupils with disabilities should take into account

the perspectives of pupils. They also advised that support might be avoided if pupils believed that it threatened social participation and that pupil perspectives about social participation must be taken into account: 'Support to promote the participation of pupils with physical disabilities in school has to involve the pupils in the decisions governing how the assistance is provided and must take account of the pupils' perspective to ensure that social participation is not threatened by the help provided' (p 97).

The attention of a TA (if 'velcroed' to the pupils being supported) could act as a cocoon, shielding pupils from both learning challenges and integrating with peers (Hemmingsson et al., 2002; Moran and Abbott, 2002; Shaw, 2001). Golze (2002, WoE D: low) reported that TAs could get in the way of the teacher, demanding teacher attention away from pupils. Ebersold (2003, WoE D: medium/low) reached a comparable conclusion in his study of integration of pupils from the ages of 7 to 15 in eastern France, recommending that successful TA support requires a co-operative system that binds all stakeholders (who are interdependent) in the same enterprise. Schooling practices cannot just be built around the child in the centre of the practice as this leads to the child being viewed 'only in the light of his/her difficulties and limitations' (Ebersold, 2003, p 104). Ebersold argues that this occurs 'despite the fact that the principle of mainstream schooling is to consider the child as a responsible, reasonable person, able to play a valuable part as a full citizen, with the same rights as others' (ibid). He concluded that high-level preparatory work between what he called the 'integration assistant' and all other stakeholders is essential, if the mainstreaming of disabled children is to be successfully achieved. The writer concludes (ibid, p 103) that schooling for a child with an impairment is rarely a coherent 'collective action organised so as to equally involve the teacher, the parents and the assistant in the child's school life. Assistants are either left alone, obliged to shape for themselves their function, or placed in a relationship of subordination to the teacher, without recognition of their specific skills' (ibid). Thus, teachers remain at a distance, with the child's work delegated to the assistant. The result is uncertainty and frustration for participants. 'Thus one has to admit that the quality of support work, and of the links and relationships created, seems to consist less in meeting the child's needs than in those of one or more of the [other] stakeholders.' (ibid).

#### 4.4.3 Stakeholder relations

The inclusion process is held to be assisted by the TAs' role in maintaining relationships between different stakeholders: for example, between parents and schools (Shaw, 2001, p 18; MENCAP, 1999) through home-school diaries or reporting back on children's learning strategies. In particular, the bridging role that TAs claimed in the study of primary schools was confirmed in the secondary

school studies. However, the success of this also depends on the nature and delivery of feedback and TAs' ability to diagnose the learners' strengths and weaknesses, but we did not find studies that described these processes in detail.

#### *TAs' perceptions of TAs' contribution to stakeholder relations*

The linking of stakeholders was a contribution identified principally by TAs themselves (see Table 4.24), but with rather low WoE studies (three low and three medium-low). The only exceptions were two medium WoE studies (MENCAP, 1999; Vulliamy and Webb, 2003). Shaw (2001, WoE: low, p 7) summarised this go-between role: TAs often acted as 'diplomats' or go-betweens' for pupils, teachers and the many other personnel now connected with schools'. TAs share this perception in other reports, most notably in Roaf (2003) whose TAs claimed a significant contribution by providing feedback to parents and linking all stakeholders. TAs see this linking role as being significant and they report it more than do other voices in the studies (Golze, 2002; MENCAP, 1999; ; O'Brien and Garner, 2001; Roaf, 2003; Shaw, 2001); this can include seeking clarification from the teacher on behalf of pupils (Shaw, 2001, p 23). TAs believe that they play a significant role in the category, contributing as described in Table 4.24.

It should also be noted that TAs also saw themselves as bridges between teachers and pupils, mediating both learning and relationships (Ebersold, 2001; Roaf, 2003) and to some extent this occurred in Vulliamy and Webb (2003). In secondary schools, TAs contributed to relations with work beyond school by being members of the local community (Roaf, 2003), as opposed to many teachers who might have few links to the community served by their school.

In summary, this section highlighted some of the ways which TAs enabled communication between different stakeholders. While TAs saw themselves as bridging different stakeholders, they appeared to play a special part in bridging parents and community with school. Therefore, TAs claimed to act as facilitators for increasing parents' access to school and supporting the development of home-parent working partnerships. However, the research studies lack the clear descriptions as to how TAs interact with parents and the most of the studies were of low or medium-low WoE as illustrated in Table 4.24.

#### *Teachers' perceptions on TAs' contributions to stakeholder relations*

Teachers also acknowledged this contribution of bridging between teachers and home, but other contributions in this category (for example, feedback to parents), were not found, as shown in Table 4.25.

The weight of evidence is not strong, with only two

**Table 4.23**

Contributions to stakeholder relations

Number of times perceptions coded	Contributions perceived	Number of studies	TA views	Teacher views	Pupils	Heads	Parents	Unclear
12	Linking between teacher / school and parent (including home visiting)	8	5	1	1	0	3	2
10	Acting as co-educators Important stakeholders in education process	8	3	3	0	0	0	4
3	Giving feedback to parents	3	1	0	2	0	0	0
3	Linking all stakeholders	2	2	0	0	0	0	1
1	Contributing to relations with work beyond school (e.g. community activity)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
4	Bridging between teacher and pupil	3	3	0	0	1	0	0

**Table 4.24**

TAs' perceptions about contributions to stakeholder relations

TAs' perceptions	Studies		
	Medium WoE	Medium-low WoE	Low WoE
Linking between teacher / school and parent (including home visiting)	MENCAP (1999)	Ebersold (2003), O'Brien and Garner (2001)	Golze (2002)
Acting as co-educators, Important stakeholders in the education process		O'Brien and Garner (2001); Ebersold (2003)	Jerwood (1999)*, Shaw (2001)
Giving feedback to parents		Roaf (2003)*	
Linking all stakeholders		Roaf (2003)*	
Bridging between teacher and pupil (not on Table 4.23)	Vulliamy and Webb (2003)	Ebersold (2003); Roaf (2003)*	

\*Secondary school only studies

**Table 4.25**

Teacher perceptions about contributions to stakeholder relations

TAs' perceptions	Studies		
	Medium WoE	Medium-low WoE	Low WoE
Linking between teacher / school and parent (including home visiting)	Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)	Mortimore et al.* (1994)	
Acting as co-educators, important stakeholders in the education process		Ebersold (2003), Mortimore et al.* (1994)	Jerwood (1999)

\*Secondary school only studies

contributions reported in four studies of medium to low weight. Nevertheless, the contribution of Vulliamy and Webb’s support workers to home-school liaison was highlighted as significant by teachers and senior managers. The support workers were believed to improve home-school communications and they provided ‘an indirect bridge to parents’ (2003, p 283). In addition, teachers learned a lot about home circumstances and this contributed to their greater understanding, which in turn led to what was perceived as a more tolerant atmosphere in school.

The four studies in Table 4.25 suggest that teachers recognised TAs’ role as a contributor to stakeholder relations, while their descriptions lack detail and depth to give great weight to these perceptions. Despite this weakness, an important implication of TAs’ bridging function was that it enabled teachers to increase their awareness of pupils’ home situations that in turn helped them to empathise with pupils. For teaching staff, there are particular considerations in this regard. The pupils, who work with TAs by definition, may present particular ‘difficulties’ and ‘needs’ on a day-to-day basis. A home perspective of such difficulties could offer additional information that could help school staff to devise more appropriate forms of support.

*Headteachers’ perceptions of TAs’ contribution to stakeholder relations*

There was some evidence, albeit from papers with low WoE, that headteachers were aware of work in this area: for example, in Kerry (2003), observing the bridging role, although this is not specifically mentioned in detail. Senior pastoral staff in the secondary school study by Vulliamy and Webb (2003, WoE: medium, p 283) found the support workers’ go-between function particularly helpful ‘for the school and the other agencies working with caseload pupils.’

Headteachers recognised the bridging TA function between key stakeholders but again these views lack detailed descriptions of how this is achieved. However, TAs’ role in maintaining stakeholder relationships was perceived positively by

headteachers and senior management staff.

*Parents’ perceptions on TAs’ contribution to stakeholder relations*

Parent perceptions, on the other hand, were reported in studies with higher WoEs. Parents in four studies (Ebersold, 2003; Farrell et al., 1999; MENCAP, 1999; Vulliamy and Webb, 2003) acknowledged the bridging contribution by TAs, in maintaining relationships and communications. The MENCAP study reported that parents believed that LSAs gave feedback to teachers about children and that LSAs played a linking role among stakeholders. Vulliamy and Webb’s support workers visited caseload pupils and were perceived as ‘someone for us from the other side’ (2003, p 281). Not being teachers, they were seen as being neutral, knowledgeable about school but independent. Furthermore, they contributed to improving parent-pupil relations, by enhancing communication between them. This gain may also have helped to bring about better or more engagement with school.

Parents clearly valued the role that TAs played in maintaining relationships between home and school. It appears that parents perceived TAs as being more approachable and non-threatening. An important finding is that TAs (support workers in Vulliamy and Webb, 2003) helped to improve relations within the home, sometimes between parents, and also between parents and pupils. While the studies do not provide detailed descriptions of these bridging processes (e.g. the nature of parent-TA discourse and parent-school engagements), what appears clearly is that parents were able to relate to TAs and trusted their knowledge of their children in schools.

*Pupils’ perceptions of TAs’ contribution to stakeholder relations*

Not surprisingly, this bridging role was only mentioned by pupils in the medium WoE study of support workers conducted by Vulliamy and Webb (2003), who saw the support workers as instrumental in managing relations between school and home, in order to re-integrate disaffected

**Table 4.26**  
Parent perceptions about TA contributions to stakeholder relations

Parents’ perceptions	Studies		
	High-medium WoE	Medium WoE	Medium-low WoE
Linking between teacher/ school and parent (including home visiting)	Farrell et al. (1999)	MENCAP (1999), Vulliamy and Webb (2003)	Ebersold (2003)
Acting as co-educators, important stakeholders in the education process			Ebersold (2003)
Linking all stakeholders		MENCAP (1999), Vulliamy and Webb (2003)	Ebersold (2003)
Bridging between teacher and pupil	Farrell et al. (1999)	MENCAP (1999)	

pupils. These support workers even worked as 'information brokers between family members' (p 282) when relations between them were frayed and this impacted on school-related issues. They also maintained communications with parents who lived apart so that both parents could both know about and address school incidences.

While Vulliamy and Webb investigated the contributions of specialist support workers, communication between stakeholders is clearly an important and acknowledged contribution even in the case of other studies that explore how TAs/LSAs work. MENCAP (1999: 18) summarised the bridging contribution in the following way:

LSAs liaise with a variety of people, for example:

- staff of other schools, especially if the involvement is with an integration link between a special school and a mainstream school;
- other staff, particularly the teachers of the inclusion and integrated lessons;
- parents, either in person or through the home-school book;
- other professionals, for example, the physiotherapist. (MENCAP, 1999, section 3.1.2)

The extent to which this liaison role might be the case in secondary schools could not be gleaned from this review, so we suggest that the issue requires further investigation.

#### 4.4.4 TAs' support of teachers

There was general recognition of the support that TAs offered to teachers, performing routine tasks that enabled teachers to focus on securing academic engagement. It is noticeable that teacher views dominate this category (see Table 4.27), as TAs stressed this contribution much less than their own direct contributions to pupils listed above in previous sections.

##### *Pupils' perceptions of TAs' support of teachers*

Just one study (medium WoE) reported pupil views about this contribution (Bowers, 1997) in which TAs are seen as helping teachers to enable them to concentrate on teaching. Bowers interprets pupils' views as seeing the additional adult as a support for 'an overworked or less than optimally effective teacher' (1997: 229). However, views about the support role in relation to teachers were rarely expressed.

Pupils view TAs' key contribution to curriculum as keeping their concentration on task. Their responses suggested that the teacher was seen to be in some way inadequate to the task of teaching the entire class, so that additional support was needed.

##### *TAs' perceptions of TAs' support of teachers*

In relation to being a helper to the teacher (i.e. enabling the teacher to concentrate on teaching), perceptions were much less in evidence. Notably, the contribution most mentioned was that giving feedback to teachers about the progress of pupils, an activity closely related to pedagogy. While TAs and teachers felt that TAs were there to support teachers, there seems to be a growing sense of supporters of learning (TAs) seeing their role more as a co-educator guided by teachers, but in a complementary way, rather than just a subservient role. Five papers with a range of WoEs, as indicated in Table 4.28, clearly reported what TAs perceived (Chambers and Pearson, 2004; Farrell et al., 1999; Jerwood, 1999; Mortimore et al., 1994; Roaf, 2003), while two others merely touched on these contributions, but with little detail (; Golze, 2002; O'Brien and Garner, 2001), summarised in Table 4.28.

The giving of feedback to teachers about student progress would appear to be a significant role at secondary level, this being a commonly claimed contribution in this category, although only two studies achieved or medium or higher WoE (Chambers and Pearson, 2004; Farrell et al., 1999).

To summarise, TAs perceived their curriculum/teacher support role as being significant, but not as significant as their direct support for pupils' learning. While they performed some routine tasks to enable teachers to concentrate on pedagogy, they clearly viewed themselves as co-educators. We found no studies that described TAs engaging in domestic activities (such as cleaning paint pots or tidying up after lessons), and there were only two mentions of resource development and maintenance.

##### *Teachers' perceptions of TAs' support of teachers*

Teacher perceptions were reported in several papers with a range of WoE, and clearly teachers welcomed the support they received. They reported that TAs gave valuable support that freed them to focus on teaching, that supported their work with pupils, and that helped them to maintain and develop resources. These perceptions, however, did not feature as highly as those relating to direct contributions to pupils' learning. There was a recognition that TAs work principally in support of pupils, their time not being consumed by mundane clerical or administrative chores.

Teachers confirmed that giving feedback was an important contribution in five studies, covering the full range of WoE. They also expressed gratitude for relief from routine tasks, but again there were only two mentions of resource development and maintenance (Golze, 2002; Mortimore et al., 1994), papers of low and medium-low WoE respectively.

**Table 4.27**  
TAs' support of teachers

Number of times perceptions coded	Contributions perceived	Number of studies	TA views	Teacher views	Pupils	Head-teachers	Parents	Unclear
13	Helping teachers (e.g. in class or with routine tasks to enable concentration on teaching)	9	3	5	1	0	0	4
9	Giving feedback on progress to teachers	8	4	2	0	1	1	1
6	Maintaining / developing resources	4	2	2	0	1	0	1
5	Contributing to individual education plans	4	3	1	0	0	0	1
3	Advising on cultural background of pupils	3	0	2	0	0	0	1
3	Supervising classes (e.g. to allow teachers to concentrate on small group); whole class teaching	3	1	1	0	0	1	0
3	Keeping records	2	0	1	0	0	0	3
1	Planning programmes of work	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
1	Advising teachers *	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
1	Improving teacher motivation*	1	0	1	0	0	0	0

\*Secondary school only studies

**Table 4.28**

TAs' perceptions of their support of teachers

TAs' perceptions	Studies			
	High-medium WoE	Medium WoE	Medium-low WoE	Low WoE
Helping teachers (e.g. in class or with routine tasks to enable concentration on teaching)	Farrell et al. (1999)	Chambers and Pearson* (2004)	Mortimore et al. (1994)	Golze, (1999)
Giving feedback on progress to teachers	Farrell et al. (1999)		Roaf* (2003)	Jerwood* (1999)
Maintaining/developing resources			Mortimore et al. (1994)	Golze, (1999)
Contributing to Individual Education Plans	Farrell et al. (1999)		O'Brien and Garner (2001)	Jerwood* (1999)
Supervising classes (e.g. to allow T to concentrate on small group); whole class teaching			O'Brien and Garner (2001)	
Advising teachers *			Roaf,* (2003)	

\*Secondary school only studies

**Table 4.29**

Teachers' perceptions of TAs' support of teachers

Teachers' perception	Studies			
	High-medium WoE	Medium WoE	Medium-low WoE	Low WoE
Helping teachers (e.g. in class or with routine tasks to enable concentration on teaching)	Farrell et al. (1999)	Neill (2002a), Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)	Ebersold (2003), Mortimore et al.* (1994)	
Giving feedback on progress to teachers	Farrell et al. (1999)	Neill (2002a), Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)	Roaf* (2003)	Golze* (2002), Jerwood* (1999)
Maintaining / developing resources			Mortimore et al.* (1994)	
Contributing to individual education plans	Farrell et al. (1999)		O'Brien and Garner (2001)	Jerwood* (1999)
Advising on cultural background of pupils		Vulliamy and Webb* (2003)		
Supervising classes (e.g. to allow teacher to concentrate on small group); whole class teaching		Neill (2002a)		
Keeping records			Mortimore et al.* (1994)	
Improving teacher motivation			Mortimore et al.* (1994)	

\* Secondary school only studies

### *Parent perceptions of TAs' support of teachers*

Parents' views on TAs' contribution to teachers were limited. Parent perceptions were reported about supervising classes (Neill, 2002a) in order to allow the teacher to concentrate on specific learners at certain times and giving feedback on progress to teachers (Ebersold, 2003), but there was very little detail as to how this took place. Perhaps they tended to view support for the teacher as helping out on an ad hoc basis.

### *Headteachers' perceptions of TAs' support of teachers*

Two medium WoE studies reported headteachers' perceptions. The cross-phase study by Moran and Abbott (2002) was the principal source, identifying that TAs:

- give feedback on progress to teachers
- maintain and/or develop resources

However, Vulliamy and Webb (2003, p 281), again medium WoE, report that senior management and pastoral staff believe that support workers saved them a great deal of time, by counselling pupils and engaging in home-school liaison. In one school, the time saving amounted to six hours of senior management time per week and up to 14 hours of other teachers' time.

### **4.4.5 Summary of overall secondary-specific perceptions of TA contributions**

Contributions identified were often comparable to roles identified in primary schools (Cajkler et al., 2006), but statements presented in Table 4.30 were not found in primary focused studies. They were identified only in the secondary specific studies.

The differences with primary school contributions (Cajkler et al., 2006) are perhaps few in number but they indicate greater focus on issues such as attendance (Kerry, 2002; Roaf, 2003; Vulliamy and Webb, 2003), an issue not mentioned in the review of primary practice. Attendance at examinations was mentioned in two studies (Kerry, 2002; Roaf, 2003), the first of medium-low WoE and the second of low WoE.

Similarly, mentoring about personal problems was mentioned, as was the support for examination preparation and attendance. However, in medium WoE studies, older pupils also found the TA presence could be distracting (Chambers and Pearson, 2004) and Jarvis (2003) reported on the possible interference of TAs in peer group relations. Bowers (1997) had also noted that older pupils might find the TA to be intrusive, and to draw or provide unwanted attention to the supported pupil. A low WoE study (Golze, 2002) supported this perspective.

In secondary-specific perceptions listed in Table

4.30, much more stress was put on acting as an example for pupils, offering them ways into learning, and collaborating with them as co-learners to encourage participation. Acting as models for learning and behaviour featured more strongly here than in primary schools (Chambers and Pearson, 2004, Golze, 2002; O'Brien and Garner, 2001; Roaf, 2003). However, it is not possible to identify how significant these differences are, so further studies are needed to determine the differences in primary and secondary learning support contributions. The role of advocate for pupils, of being a less formal presence in the classroom and schools also seems to be of greater importance in secondary schools, but this is a tentative conclusion, more an impression than a proven reality, and something that should be further explored. The paper by Roaf (2003), although medium-low WoE, was informative as was the work of Vulliamy and Webb (2003). With the exception of the paper by Chambers and Pearson (2004), there was more emphasis on combating disaffection than was apparent in the review of primary TAs: for example, empathising with pupils, seeking to integrate misunderstood pupils, securing attendance, and fostering completion of examinations and homework.

One area of challenge lies in the effective deployment of TAs. Where can they make the most effective support? Should this be in support of individual subjects or across the curriculum? Primary schools face challenges in the deployment of TAs (e.g. as specialists in literacy, numeracy or ICT; in support of one teacher in one year; across years) but the Review Group did not identify this in the literature review of primary practice (Cajkler et al., 2006).

Nevertheless, general findings from the studies suggest that TAs often take semi-independent roles in schools whether working in one subject area or across the curriculum, and make significant decisions about learners and their academic and social engagement. In the three medium-low WoE cross-phase studies, it is a role that is variously seen as semi-independent (O'Brien and Garner, 2002), not a support role (Shaw, 2001), and critical to inclusion (Ebersold, 2003). While studies refer to the specific TA functions in enabling inclusion, the details of these discourses appear impressionistic and thin. The secondary only studies did not add to the impression of independent operation by TAs. The TAs in Chambers and Pearson's (2004) medium WoE study of modern language teaching stressed the way the TA depended on the teacher for the specialist input which was then used to support learning. Support workers in Vulliamy and Webb (2003) had a defined role but worked in complement with teachers, saving them significant amounts of time that could be devoted to teaching. The success of such initiatives depends in large part on collaboration and trust among participants in the process (Ebersold, 2003). However, TAs felt that social issues appeared to be more part of their work at secondary level, helping disaffected pupils, and acting as an advocate

**Table 4.30**  
Secondary-specific perceptions

Secondary-specific perception	Studies			
	High-medium WoE	Medium WoE	Medium-low WoE	Low WoE
Academic and socio-academic contributions				
Co-learning with pupils; acting as a pseudo-pupil		Chambers and Pearson (2004)	O'Brien and Garner (2001), Roaf (2003)	
Setting good examples; acting as a role model; modelling learning/behaviour		Chambers and Pearson (2004)	Roaf (2003)	Golze (2002)
Securing attendance at school exams			Roaf (2003)	
Working in one subject area		Chambers and Pearson (2004), Neill (2002a)		
Securing attendance at school		Vulliamy and Webb (2003)		Kerry (2002)
Supporting all subjects (across the secondary curriculum)		Chambers and Pearson (2004)	Roaf (2003)	
Helping maintain a positive climate for all		Chambers and Pearson (2004)	Roaf (2003)	
Acting as a distraction		Vulliamy and Webb (2003)		Golze (2002)
Supporting ICT development			Mortimore et al. (1994)	
Providing support for writing activities		Jarvis (2003)		
Supporting homework/exam preparation		Vulliamy and Webb (2003)		
Contribution to inclusion				
Mentoring about personal problems		Vulliamy and Webb (2003)	Mortimore et al. (1994)	Kerry (2002)
Being a key to pupil attendance		Vulliamy and Webb (2003)	Roaf (2003)	Kerry (2002)
Interfering with peer group relationships		Jarvis (2003)		
Empathising with pupils from unsupportive backgrounds				Kerry (2002)
Giving opportunities to children that were misunderstood by teachers			Roaf (2003)	
Contributions to teachers				
Advising teachers			Roaf (2003)	
Improving teacher motivation				

for misunderstood pupils, etc. In secondary schools, TAs appeared to have additional roles in supporting homework, social inclusion, mentoring of personal problems, maintaining and motivating attendance, managing behaviour, acting as a role model, and acting as a less formal point of contact.

Roaf (2003) summarises this perspective: 'LSAs could give many examples of times of where they felt that their presence had made a difference, perhaps

helping a teacher to accept a child and to make both teacher and child feel valued' (p 228). One LSA went on to claim: 'You can act as mediator between children and their teacher where there's been some misunderstanding or the children don't understand' (ibid). This is a significant claim and further studies are needed to determine just how regular and effective such interactions might be.

## 4.5 In-depth review: quality-assurance results

### *Application of in-depth inclusion criteria*

Pairs of reviewers conducted in-depth review screenings and compared results, which achieved a high degree of agreement on all criteria except NX7 (reporting of research methodology). Many studies failed to include unequivocal guidance on the research methods used, particularly sampling procedures, leading to some uncertainty and discussion between reviewers about inclusion and exclusion. Shaw (2001) and Roaf (2003) were retained as they contained significant claims about the perceptions of learning supporters; however, both were the subject of controversy among reviewers. As a result, the studies could only be classified as having low and medium-low weights of evidence as a result.

### *Data extraction*

The 17 studies included for in-depth review were independently double data-extracted by members of the Review Group, working in pairs, and by Abigail Rowe and Mukdarut Bangpan (our EPPI-Centre reviewers). Following data extractions, each pair of reviewers held a consultation to discuss results, resolve any differences of opinion and agree a final composite version of the data extraction to be uploaded into the team review section of the EPPI-Centre's Research Evidence in Education Library (REEL). The data extractions were also subject to review by a meeting of the Review and Advisory Group, which focused on the final weight of evidence judgments in relation to the question guiding this systematic review. This led to some adjustments in the WoE values assigned to each study.

## 4.6 Nature of users' involvement in the review and its impact

As with other systematic reviews, the Review Advisory Group made a significant contribution to suggesting the focus of the review, as well as reading and commenting on the draft protocol and the draft of the final report. The Advisory Group offered advice throughout the process of conducting the review. The group consisted of teachers, SEN advisors, teacher educators, researchers, TAs and policy-makers. Our user groups contained teacher trainers, teachers, advisers, TAs and headteachers, who were consulted at regular intervals throughout the review. They helped to shape the review question, confirmed the relevance of the results of our initial searches, and responded to the findings that detailed perceptions about TA contributions to social and academic engagement. Following the first review of primary practice, they requested that perceptions about the contributions of secondary school TAs be synthesised to complete the picture.

In addition, there was structured discussion of the

emerging findings during the first review with three groups of TAs (two primary and one secondary) and their trainers on STA programmes. This exercise was repeated for this review with a group of secondary TAs, which tended to confirm the perceptions reported here.

## 4.7 Summary of results of synthesis

All the studies, whether of high-medium, medium or lower weight, suggest that TAs are active agents in securing academic and/or social engagement, perceiving TAs as contributing to learning, as valuable resources, supporters of learning, mediators and intermediaries, as listeners and sources of support. TA voices are increasingly being heard, but we need to listen more to participants, especially pupils. We also need to look at the classroom interactions in which they are engaged to identify with much greater specificity what they do to contribute to academic and social engagement. Where there is inter-agency working, as in Vulliamy and Webb (2003, WoE D: medium), the factors that contribute to the success of such partnerships could be usefully explored so that policy about the role and training of TAs can be reviewed. Perhaps there is a case for arguing that we should depend less on perceptions of what is done, and rather more on detailed analysis of what actually happens.

Following the weights of evidence analysis (represented for the reader's convenience in Table 4.31), eight studies were considered to provide overall medium weight of evidence (WoE D), four were considered to provide medium to low WoE, and four low WoE. One study was considered of higher weight (Farrell et al., 1999) than the rest, but even this classification was hedged.

That there were no unequivocally 'high' WoE studies reflects the fact that few studies sought to identify exclusively the perceptions of stakeholders about TAs' contributions, with the possible exceptions of Chambers and Pearson (2004, WoE D: medium). Farrell et al. (1999, WoE D: high/medium) concluded that effective TA contributions promote pupils' participation in social and academic processes, enable children to achieve more independence as learners, and help to raise standards for all pupils. They found that TAs and teachers might be involved in alternating roles at certain times and that TAs were expected 'to carry out a whole variety of tasks both within and between lessons' (p 51). They arrived at specifications relating to good practice and proposed how TAs could be effective, for example, in enabling children to achieve more independence as learners.

All stakeholders claimed that TAs contributed in the following ways:

- a. Directly to pupils' learning and engagement in the classroom. This was deemed to be the most significant contribution.

**Table 4.31**

Overall weights of evidence

	Author(s) and year	Focus	Overall weight of evidence (D)
1	Bowers (1997)	Cross-phase	Medium
2	Ebersold (2003)	Cross-phase	Medium-Low
3	Farrell et al. (1999)	Cross-phase	High-medium
4	Hemmingsson et al. (2003)	Cross-phase	Medium
5	MENCAP	Cross-phase	Medium
6	Moran and Abbott (2002)	Cross-phase	Medium
7	Mortimore et al. (1994)	Cross-phase, but secondary case studies	Medium-Low
8	Neill (2002a)	Cross-phase	Medium
9	O'Brien and Garner (2001)	Cross-phase	Medium-Low
10	Shaw (2001)	Cross-phase	Low
11	Chambers and Pearson (2004)	Secondary only	Medium
12	Golze (2002)	Secondary only	Low
13	Jarvis (2003)	Secondary only	Medium
14	Jerwood (1999)	Secondary only	Low
15	Kerry (2002)	Secondary only	Low
16	Roaf (2003)	Secondary only	Medium-Low
17	Vulliamy and Webb (2003)	Secondary only	Medium

b. To the inclusion of pupils by fostering independence and encouraging interaction, but they could also act as a barrier (a perception, particularly by older pupils).

c. Significantly to stakeholder relations, acting as a go-between in range of contexts: for example, home-school (Vulliamy and Webb, 2003), teachers and pupils working together (Ebersold, 2003; Roaf, 2003; WoE D: medium/low), teachers and pupils and other personnel both in and out of school staff (MENCAP, 1999, WoE D: medium; Roaf, 2003, WoE D: medium/low; Shaw, 2001, WoE D: low). The perception was that TAs acted as a kind of glue between participants, bridging between the different participants in the educational process and enabling the pupil to engage more profitably.

d. Directly to teachers and the delivery of the curriculum: for example, in giving feedback about pupils to teachers. This seems to be a significant role taken on by TAs according to both TA and teacher responses. Teachers believed that TAs made a helpful contribution with the routine tasks, but only three studies reported TAs' perceptions about this.

The studies, nevertheless, leave no doubt that TAs' contributions are considered valuable, and that TAs are perceived to be engaged in activities that directly affect academic and social engagement, although not all studies make clear how.

While the impact of the contributions was not something that we could determine in this review, we can draw the following conclusions:

- TAs are perceived to promote inclusion of pupils with SEN. Farrell et al. (1999), MENCAP (1999), Moran and Abbott (2002) and Shaw (2001) all report similar perceptions in the cross-phase studies and secondary only studies added further weight to the perception (Jarvis, 2003; Roaf, 2003; Vulliamy and Webb, 2003).
- TAs are perceived to play an important role as mediators, whose knowledge and understanding of pupils can be utilised to help pupils engage in learning and participation. In the cross-phase studies, only Bowers (1997) and MENCAP (1999) reported pupil perceptions of this but, in the secondary-only studies, there were several mentions of this contribution by pupils (Chambers and Pearson, 2004; Jarvis, 2003; Vulliamy and Webb, 2003). Other stakeholders acknowledge this contribution. TAs in particular believe that they have a positive influence on pupils' on-task behaviour.

On the other hand, the danger of the cocooning effect was noticed in three medium WoE cross-phase studies (Farrell et al., 1999; Hemmingsson et al., 2002; Moran and Abbott, 2002) and further supported in the secondary-only studies by teachers and TAs (Chambers and Pearson, 2004), headteachers (Jarvis, 2003; Mortimore et al., 1994) but not mentioned by pupils. It should be noted, however, that, as reported by Jarvis (2003), one pupil complained of the TA interfering with peer group relationships and others complained of being over-supported. Jarvis concludes with the following:

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*It is salutary to hear how pupils speak so eloquently about their feelings of being over-supported at times. The support role is extremely difficult and requires an awareness of pupils' needs for a level of autonomy and an understanding that making mistakes is part of the process. It also requires a whole school approach to identifying the role of support personnel and strategies for involving them in planning, the preparation of resources and support for the teacher and for the lesson as a whole, as well as for the individual pupil. The need for clear policies, and time for the teacher of the deaf or special needs coordinator to monitor the process of support, cannot be overemphasized. Nor too can the importance of obtaining pupils' views on their support. It is unlikely that these pupils had expressed the views presented here to staff in their schools. (Jarvis, 2003, 167)*

Our review suggests that further studies of perceptions are required and that staff in schools should have the opportunity to listen to pupils' views about support.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

# Implications

The final section of this chapter addresses the implications of this research for the following:

- Policy: specifically that which relates to use of TAs in classrooms
- Professional practice: TAs and those who lead and manage their work in schools, including guidance given to practitioners
- Future research

However, the chapter begins with a consideration of the strengths and weaknesses in the study.

### 5.1 Strengths and limitations of this systematic review

#### *Strengths*

Following the updating of the map, this in-depth review of secondary school teaching assistant practice, a consistent picture of stakeholder perceptions emerged, which complements the work of the first review's in-depth study of primary schools (Cajkler et al., 2006). While there are some secondary-specific contributions as presented in Table 4.30, a general picture of TA contributions can be confidently drawn from the exhaustive reviews that we have conducted.

The insights gained through the two reviews will be of use to policy-makers and planners of teaching assistant training programmes. The latter can benefit from awareness of the need to train TAs not to be over-intrusive or over-protective of children receiving support.

Turning to the EPPI-Centre process, the disciplines of screening (using inclusion/exclusion criteria, keywording, data extraction tools and EPPI-Centre Reviewer) enabled reviewers to focus very firmly on the issue of stakeholder perceptions. From these processes, we can confidently conclude that the perceptions of the contributions made by TAs described are robust, but little detail is offered to describe how these contributions are achieved.

The protocol set the agenda for the review with the elaboration of the key question and the description of the process that would be undertaken to explore the question. This gave a structured framework for the study of the literature. The EPPI-Centre procedure enabled us systematically and transparently to identify a significant number of relevant studies that address, at least in part, the question posed by the review. Through systematic data-extraction procedures, the research team was able to analyse in depth the perceptions in relation to predefined categories that frame TAs' support roles. We now know the extent to which stakeholders have been asked to present their views about TA contributions.

#### *Limitations*

There are significant limitations to the studies in the review. None achieved high WoE and there are quite serious flaws in several studies: for example, Shaw (2001) that provides only limited information about its subjects and methods. The quality of description of contributions varied significantly between studies; Chambers and Pearson (2004) is a rare example of detailed description of activities, in this case in support of foreign language teaching. A further weakness lies in the imbalance of stakeholders represented in the research. We learn little about what children think of the additional adults who help them in the classroom and even less about the views of parents. Headteachers' views are represented

but their perceptions were focused more on support for teachers, rather than on support for learners. That said, headteachers viewed TAs as making a significant contribution to the integration of pupils with special needs.

We do not know about the effectiveness of TAs with regard to the four categories of contribution identified. There are important questions to which this review could give at best partial answers, for example: Are there some contributions for which TAs are better prepared, or more appropriately placed? How do they cope when switching between roles and contributions? To what extent are schools aware of the varied contributions of TAs?

A further difficulty arose with the educational setting of studies, which were often cross-phase. Ten studies out of the 17 in the final in-depth studies were cross-phase, including perceptions about TAs in primary schools. Few secondary-specific studies made it through to data extraction and four of these were deemed to be of lower weight than others in the review. The difficulty of finding secondary-specific studies means that the findings have to be treated with great caution.

The review question also posed difficulties and may have led to lost opportunities, as focusing on identifying perceptions possibly led to the exclusion of important studies, for example:

- studies in which observations are a major part
- impact investigations of TA interventions
- trials (e.g. comparison of classes with/without TAs)

We focused on what stakeholders thought, rather than on how TAs were employed or how they were managed. We did not review the impact they had on attainment. This may have led us towards a limited focus of what stakeholders think about teaching assistant contributions and the wider issues that may have an impact on how they support learning in schools. It is essential that further studies be conducted to determine whether having a TA is integrating or limiting with regard to inclusion. When TAs (and others) claim that they contribute to inclusion, what do they mean? This study has not been able to shed light on this. In addition, as a result of concerns about the quality of studies, we suggest that further studies are needed to yield 'thicker' data to get at the heart of teaching assistant practice, if we are to understand this emerging important role.

There are other significant limitations to this kind of research: for example, reducing the map to a manageable number of studies for data extraction meant that some decisions were influenced by workload management considerations. The scope of the in-depth study was restricted to Europe, but only two of the 17 studies were conducted

outside Great Britain so generalisability is an issue for consideration. Nevertheless, some important implications emerge from the review and these are discussed below. In addition, there have been reviews in the USA that have focused on paraprofessional practice and the reader is referred to similar studies, such as that conducted by Giangreco et al. (2001c).

The 'overall weight of evidence' (WoE D) refers to a set of assessment criteria which judges the appropriateness of the focus of studies, with the focus of the in-depth review, the appropriateness of research approach and design in answering the research questions, and the trustworthiness of conclusions. It is a particularly exacting assessment criterion to work with due to the limitations of some journals in reporting detailed research methodology, data-analysis procedures and findings. On some occasions, some papers provided in-depth research findings with rich descriptions, but it was not always possible to regard them as 'high weight of evidence' due to the limited information on the choice and use of research methodology and methods. Overall, very few studies provided sufficient information on the analytical frameworks that were used to generate research conclusions to warrant a high weight of evidence in this respect; this was found to be the particular weakness of the studies reviewed in the in-depth study.

Finally, a word should be said about our Advisory Group. Although it included teachers, a headteacher, advisers, trainers and TAs, we were unable to include pupils and parents. Resource and practical constraints (for example, securing pupil presence at Advisory Group meetings with the Review Group) led to this limitation. Many of the TAs that we consulted were also parents of pupils receiving support, but the absence of a consistent parent voice in the Advisory Group needs to be acknowledged.

## 5.2 Implications

Implications are considered under the headings of policy, practice and research.

### 5.2.1 Policy

The remodelling of the workforce agenda (DfES, 2003) envisages support for teachers that removes a range of routine administrative tasks. A large number of TAs may well be engaged in this and the development of this initiative has been evaluated (for example, Thomas et al., 2004). However, there are clearly many TAs who are directly involved in supporting pupils' learning in direct ways (Blatchford et al. 2002; 2004; Farrell et al., 1999), which Wilson et al. (2002a) calculate to take up at least 60% of a TA's time. Furthermore, we could not find evidence of TAs purely engaged in domestic tasks. Roaf (2003, p 223) estimates that a quarter of fulltime equivalent TAs are working in support of pupils with special needs, a significant workforce. LSAs in other studies were reported as contributing to inclusion

in significant ways: for example, in Farrell et al. (1999), MENCAP (1999), Moran and Abbott (2002), and a number of other studies.

This review also contributed to the understanding of TAs' potential to secure inclusion in schools. We not only identified perceptions about how TAs enable, but also how they could impede, inclusion by being overprotective and creating dependency of pupils on the additional in class-support. This requires attention to the training of TAs on how to scaffold pupils' learning strategically so that they become autonomous learners.

Another important message in the studies explored relates to the opportunity to plan for inclusion and inclusion policies depending for success on the contribution of all stakeholders, including TAs (Ebersold, 2003). Jarvis (2003) highlights the skills and sensitivities required for effective support work, pointing out that the needs of the most vulnerable members of a class may be dependent on the success of the least trained members of the pedagogic team. This has implications for training policies for TAs: for example, what to include; opportunities for supervision; observation, feedback and continuing guidance. The support workers in Vulliamy and Webb (2003) were social-work trained and they focused on including disaffected pupils. Investigation of social work models of training might be worthwhile for some schools, depending on the focus of the TAs' work.

As roles change, secondary headteachers now have to consider the strategic role of TAs, and how to organise and deploy them to best effect: for example, either as a support to some pupils across the curriculum, or as a helper in some departments. There may be a changing pattern of teaching that sees teachers at secondary level focus more on planning and teaching the subject, while delegating responsibility for securing learning of the content and skills to other adults. This may be particularly the case where certain children are deemed to need something additional (Bowers, 1997). Indeed, Neill (2002a, p 4) concluded that teachers might be tempted to become TAs because the most pleasurable work appears to be passing away from teachers into the hands of their TAs. To what extent is this becoming a feature of school life and organisation?

The implications of such developments for headteachers and teachers are that team building, communication and team management are essential skills for teachers to bring about improvements in learning through the successful working of classroom teams. Could there be fragmentation in both content and approach as they are filtered through different members of the team? If so, teachers may be seen as distant figures, classroom managers who devolve responsibility to others and get to know some pupils less well than other less trained adults.

There have been notable recent initiatives in the

UK (e.g. HLTA training and Foundation degree opportunities) aiming to provide specific targeted programmes for improving TAs' skills. The motivation for these initiatives, in particular the Foundation degrees, may have come from a belief that many TAs have the potential to make an even more valuable contribution in supporting learning processes in schools.

Although training was not the focus of this review, our findings have implications for the future training of both TAs and teachers, perhaps even headteachers. Procedures for the appointment, training and development of TAs in the UK have seen significant changes in recent years and the voices heard in the research are clearly growing in confidence, highlighting their pedagogic contributions.

While there are clearly defined standards for recognition as a HLTA, there are, as yet, no nationally agreed standards to be met for appointment as a TA, although occupational standards have been in place since 2001 (Local Government National Training Organisation, 2001). The degree to which these are met by TAs requires further investigation.

In the USA, national standards are emerging following the 2001 'No Child Left Behind Act' that paraeducators in Title 1 schools should:

- demonstrate a range of instructional abilities in support of reading, writing and mathematics
- have completed two years of higher education study
- have obtained an associate's degree, equivalent to Foundation degree (Trautman, 2004)

The results of this review not only have implications for how TAs should be prepared for the job, but also how other school staff should work with TAs or, indeed, be trained to work with TAs. The implications for teacher education policy are significant. Wallace et al. (2001, p 525) identified seven competency areas that teachers should possess:

- communication with paraprofessionals (sharing information; providing clear guidance)
- planning and scheduling (co-ordination, goal-setting, etc.)
- instructional support (giving feedback on techniques, etc.)
- modelling appropriate classroom behaviours
- public relations (being able to explain what TAs do and how they contribute)
- training of TAs (being able to offer on the job

training)

- managing paraprofessional staff

New teachers are expected to be able to 'collaborate effectively with colleagues and work cooperatively in teams' (Draft TDA Standard, April, 2006) and manage the work of others, where appropriate. Our findings suggest that teacher education and TA training programmes should have regard for the four areas of contribution identified:

- *Contributions to pupils' socio-academic engagement* (direct support for learning): There is clearly a place for the training of TAs in offering direct instructional support either across the curriculum or in a particular subject area.
- *Contributions to inclusion* (how to secure interaction in the classroom, with the teacher, with other pupils, how to promote independence while reducing dependency on support): An issue here might be whether support is faculty based or across the curriculum.
- *Maintaining stakeholder relations* (understanding how TAs oil the wheels in maintaining relations between teachers and pupils and sometimes parents): establishing the remit of TAs in this domain might be an issue as direct communications with parents are less likely in secondary than in primary schools.
- *Supporting the teacher and the curriculum* (how to establish time to plan together, planning for the inclusion of TAs, how to help free up time for teachers to concentrate on teaching and including all pupils, how to devolve responsibilities to the TA, including tasks such as display and resource management).

The extent to which existing programmes can prepare trainee teachers and existing TAs for these tasks should be reviewed to take account of the changing shape of the workforce. The 'job' requires that TAs be ready to act as mediators of interactions, liaison workers, sympathetic ears, adaptors of teaching and teaching material. What are the qualifications for the TA role, and how are their recruitment and appointment being monitored to make sure that they take up their posts prepared to act as learning supporters? These are among the challenges facing the system as it employs yet more TAs.

### 5.2.2 Professional practice

Significant claims are made about the ways in which TAs promote social interaction, about ways in which they act for pupils and relate to them. If TA perspectives are reliable, it is possible that we could learn much from the way TAs manage relations with pupils.

One of the many 'claimed' benefits of TAs is

their connection to local schools. As most live in close proximity to the schools they serve and may share a common sociocultural background, and it is believed they more readily understand the perspectives of pupils. In several studies, it is suggested that they relate well to pupils, acting as a willing listener and also giving a voice to pupils; they also act as an advocate for pupils who may have been misunderstood. As well as attending to pastoral and social needs, for many pupils they act as role-models, as integrators of pupils, as supporters of learning, as bridge-builders for pupils both to other pupils and to their teachers. These are also areas that can benefit from further research: for example, how TAs 'bridge' the feedback and feed-forward processes between teachers and pupils, how they influence relations between teachers and pupils, or the extent to which pupils value TAs as 'local' role-models.

Teachers and headteachers value their contributions, as supports for both learning and inclusion. In the Vulliamy and Webb study (2003), support workers were critical to the re-integration of disaffected pupils and they were credited with making school experience less daunting. Other students see them as helpful to their learning of a particular subject (Chambers and Pearson, 2004).

There are, however, a number of issues for secondary schools to consider. Pupils are less enthusiastic in some studies (for example, Bowers, 1997; Jarvis, 2003) especially as they get older. Farrell et al. (1999) highlighted the kind of support that pupils preferred. Knowing when to offer support and when to withdraw, and knowing how to promote independence were critical to successful support work. There is evidence from the USA that pupils may experience long-lasting feelings of exclusion and frustration as a result of being 'supported' in an over-intrusive way. For instance, a retrospective study (Broer et al. 2005) reported former pupils' perceptions of paraprofessionals as barriers to inclusion and integration. The concern was echoed in other studies: notably Bowers (1997) and Jarvis (2003), but also by heads in ; Ebersold (2003), Moran and Abbott (2002) and Mortimore et al. (1994). Ebersold's conclusions suggest that further studies are needed to consider just whose interests are being served by the different adults in classroom teams. We know of no retrospective studies in the UK to match that of Broer et al. (2005), an omission that needs to be rectified if we are to evaluate current inclusion practices in a comprehensive way.

Some TAs work across the secondary curriculum, while others appear to support in one subject only. There are subject knowledge implications as well as questions about the experience that pupils are likely to have when TA support is subject based or across the curriculum. In addition, the quality of teacher-TA partnership/teamwork may differ between primary and secondary schools. It may be easier for partnerships to develop in primary

schools where teacher and TA may work together for a large part of the week. This may be the same where secondary TAs are attached to departments. A recent study found that secondary school TAs come into contact with higher numbers of teachers than in primary schools, meaning that effective partnerships are more difficult to establish and sustain than in primary schools (Walsh, 2005, p 7). At secondary level, placing TAs in subject areas may make a pupil feel less secure or it may provide for a variety of contacts during the day. What kind of experience do the different approaches bring to our pupils? Where pupils are supported across the curriculum and how does this experience differ from an alternative that might allow for six or seven TAs per day having access to pupils? What judgments underpin such arrangements? Pupil perceptions about this experience need to be explored.

Mortimore et al. (1992, 1994) found that roles could become blurred but reported that the presence of associate staff allowed teachers to shed administrative tasks, thus enhancing learning opportunities for pupils (1992, p 180). However, since the work of Mortimore et al. (1994), there appears to have been a move towards greater pedagogic engagement. The development of the TA as a semi-autonomous supporter of learning brings with it a series of challenges at administrative and planning level. TAs may be under the formal guidance of teachers and senior managers in schools, but, in their direct interactions with pupils, they are perceived to be making significant pedagogic decisions. In addition, an incidental finding of our review is concern about lack of time for planning, mentioned in a number of studies, notably MENCAP (1999) and Roaf (2003), and it is a concern reflected in US studies (Giangreco et al., 2001c).

Roaf (2003) suggests that TAs are becoming increasingly independent. They are complementary to teachers and guided by them, but some believe that they have a distinct educational role. Roaf suggests that they may even give advice to teachers about teaching, even suggesting approaches to helping particular children. The advocacy role was also especially important at secondary school level. What this means for the training and development of new teachers and new TAs is an issue that will be the subject of review and investment in future years.

TAs often live in the same community as pupils (Roaf, 2003) and may have access to pupil knowledge that might not be readily accessible to teachers. So, an interesting question is to what extent could teachers in secondary schools become distant figures for some pupils, who depend on TAs for the bulk of their instruction, guidance and social modelling? Finally, is the success of social-work trained support workers (Vulliamy and Webb, 2003) in saving time and bringing about greater inclusion a challenge to current approaches to deploying TAs?

Such considerations give rise to questions about the

daily experience of pupils in our schools:

- Who knows the students? Who greets and values them?
- Is the use of TAs detaching teachers from pupils?
- Do teachers now get to know certain pupils better than others?
- Do some pupils now learn more from their TA than from the teacher?
- To what extent do teachers plan for and disseminate to other adults in the classroom?
- How does training prepare TAs for their contributions?

### 5.2.3 Future research

As we conclude this review, three practical questions arise:

1. Are TAs adequately prepared for the four major roles that they are perceived to fulfil?
2. Are teachers trained to manage or work with the activities of TAs?
3. To what extent do secondary headteachers take account of the TAs' contributions when planning their provision?

Our understanding of the content and quality of interactions in which TAs engage remains limited. For example, what kinds of discourse do TAs engage in when:

- a. supporting teachers in the classroom
- b. working directly with an individual pupil
- c. feeding back on progress to teachers
- d. interacting with parents?

As with primary TAs (Cajkler et al., 2006), we could not find detailed studies that had touched upon ways in which TAs talk to pupils. Perceptions remain at a general level. The evolution of TAs gives rise to some concerns about the degree to which their contributions are being researched and evaluated. While there have been a number of studies of TAs as behaviour managers, the study of support for pupils with physical disabilities is not highly developed in the UK and compares unfavourably with practice in the USA. Support for literacy work has continued in the hands of TAs, but few studies focus specifically on this important contribution. There are also very few studies of perceptions about the contributions of bilingual assistants in secondary schools, or of general support for EAL in secondary schools in the UK. The absence of secondary school studies may suggest that bilingual support is rare, unavailable or

even unnecessary in secondary schools. On the other hand, it could just mean that work is taking place but not being consistently evaluated.

A number of questions arise, some of which are related to the pedagogic subject knowledge of TAs:

- How do TAs cope with subject knowledge to fulfil their mediational/interpretive role in secondary schools, especially when they work across the curriculum?
- How effective is cross-curricular support? How does this compare with arrangements which see TAs located in one faculty/department?
- More generally, what is the impact of cross-curricular and single department TAs?

In addition, there are questions about pupils' experience in school and their perceptions about the provision made for them:

- Whom do pupils perceive to be their main point of contact?
- How do they view the different adults they encounter in individual subjects and across the curriculum?
- How many relationships are pupils receiving support expected to negotiate and maintain on a daily basis?

### 5.3 Conclusions

In order to understand teaching assistant contributions, which are wide, variable and evolving, this review has explored the perspectives of a range of important stakeholders. As in primary schools, secondary TAs are valued and their impact is believed to be positive, although only partly understood and occasionally misunderstood.

The mere presence of additional adults in the classroom is not a guarantee of social and academic

engagement. While most perceptions appear to be positive, the negative perception of pupils over-protected by TAs was mentioned in a number of our included studies (Chambers and Pearson, 2004; Jarvis, 2003; Mortimore et al. 1994) and could be inferred from other cross-phase studies (for example, Bowers (1997) and MENCAP (1999), and even Shaw (2001) despite its low WoE). Similar occasional dissenting voices who regard TAs as a hindrance could be heard in the systematic map, so the way in which TAs intervene is an issue that requires greater understanding.

There are a range of issues that need to be better understood if the increasing deployment of TAs in our classrooms is to be managed and progressed in a principled way, informed by evidence from those affected by current policy initiatives. TAs face important challenges as they become ever more significant contributors to pupils' learning: for example, when to offer individual support to particular pupils, when to encourage interaction, how to promote learner independence, and how to engage in teamwork with both teachers and pupils. At secondary level, there are also subject knowledge issues for TAs who work across the curriculum or in one subject area (e.g. modern languages).

This review suggests that participant voices have begun to emerge, but there have been few studies and many of these are of limited depth, especially secondary-specific studies of which we could find very few. It is clear that pupils' voices are under-represented in the research, as are those of parents. The latter, when consulted, seem unclear about the contributions of TAs to the education of their children. Nonetheless, the importance of listening to children and to other stakeholders has been established in a number of studies (for example, Bowers, 1997; Ebersold, 2003; Golze, 2002; Jarvis, 2003; MENCAP, 1999; Vulliamy and Webb, 2003). With the development of TA-related policies in the UK (workforce remodelling, the increase in the number of TAs deployed in schools, the introduction of HLTAs), it is essential that we listen to views to inform practice.

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## CHAPTER SIX

# References

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*Studies in the in-depth synthesis are indicated with an asterisk \* (main studies).*

*Linked papers in the synthesis have the symbols \$\* before the entry.*

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## Appendix 1.1: Authorship of this report

This work is a report of a systematic review conducted working with support staff.

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## **Conflict of interest**

In the conduct of this review, we have worked within the EPPI-Centre guidelines, methodology and quality-assurance procedures for systematic reviewing. While we consulted the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) about the review and were consulted by them, we have worked in an independent way. There may have been occasions when our own educational interests and understandings impacted on our judgments. However, the system of pairs of reviewers arriving at independent judgements attempts to limit bias as much as possible. There are no conflicts of interest for any members of the group.

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We are grateful for the contributions of everyone who worked on the review, including all members of the Advisory Group, and three groups of teaching assistants who responded to, and commented on, our findings.

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## Appendix 2.1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

### Exclusion criteria for the systematic map

Studies were excluded from the map if they were

- NOT about perceptions of stakeholders (teachers, teaching assistants, pupils, headteachers or parents): X1
- NOT about teaching assistants: X2
- NOT about Foundation Stage to KS5 (4-19): X3
- NOT about supporting pupils for academic and/or social engagement (including SEN/EAL): X4
- NOT about the pupils' curriculum (including SEN, EAL): X5
- NOT about teaching assistants working on tasks that relate directly to learning/social engagement: X6
- NOT primary empirical research studies: X7
- NOT published in the period 1970-2005: X8
- NOT published in English: X9
- About librarians: X10 (initially X0)
- Theses: XA
- Newspaper articles: XGAZ
- Not available: XNA (This only applied to a small number of papers at a later date when they could not be retrieved.)

### Exclusion criteria for the in-depth review

**Criterion 1:** They were not published in or after 1988 (NX1); they did not focus on part of the secondary (11-16/18) age group (NX2); the type of engagement described in the study was not both academic and/or social (NX3); teaching assistants were not paid (NX4).

**Criterion 2:** Studies were not published in Europe or the UK.

#### Criterion 3: Scope

a. Studies were not focused on stakeholders' descriptions of the activities that teaching assistants are involved in, thus containing at least some description of TAs' activities (NX5).

b. Stakeholders' perceptions of the contribution that such activities make to social and or academic engagement were not:

- i) a clearly stated aim of the study, or
- ii) explicitly discussed in the findings (NX6)

c. Studies did not report their research methodology including at least

- i) a description how the sample was generated and
- ii) some information on the methods for collecting views/perspectives (NX7)

d. Studies focused on pupils engaged in mainstream education (NX8).

## Appendix 2.2: Search strategy for electronic databases

Sources	Availability	Time period of search
Databases		
Educational Resource Index and Abstracts (ERIC)	Dialog@Site Web version	1966-1983 1984-1989 1990-Sept 2005
British Educational Index (BEI)	Dialog@Site Web version	1976-Sept 2005
Australian Educational Index (AEI)	Dialog@Site Web version	1976-Sept 2005
PsycInfo	Ovid Web version	
ISI Web of Science	MIMAS ISI Web of Knowledge Web version	1981-2005
International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS)	BIDS Web version	1970-2005
ArticleFirst	OCLC FirstSearch Web version	1970-2005

### **Strategies**

#### **ERIC**

CLASS AID?

OR TEACHER AID?

OR CLASSROOM AID?

OR TEACHING AID?

OR CURRICULUM SUPPORT?

OR TEACHING COACH?

OR EDUCATIONAL THERAPIST?

OR PSYCHOEDUCATOR?

OR PARAEDUCATOR?

OR BILINGUAL ASSISTANT?

OR HELPER?  
 OR CHILDRENS LIBRARIAN?  
 OR SCHOOL LIBRARIAN?  
 OR LEARNING MENTOR?  
 OR ANCILLAR?  
 OR AUXILIAR?  
 OR PARAPROFESSIONAL?  
 OR SUPPORT STAFF?  
 OR LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT?  
 OR SUPPORT ASSISTANT?  
 AND SCHOOL?  
 NOT UNIVERSIT?  
 NOT COLLEGE?  
 NOT MEDICAL SCHOOL?  
 NOT HIGHER EDUC?

### ***BEI***

FACILITATOR?  
 OR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ASSISTANT?  
 OR CURRICULUM SUPPORT?  
 OR TEACHER AID?  
 OR EDUCATIONAL THERAPIST?  
 OR PARAEDUCATOR?  
 OR BILINGUAL ASSISTANT?  
 OR HELPER?  
 OR CHILDRENS LIBRARIAN?  
 OR SCHOOL LIBRARIAN?  
 OR VOLUNTEER?  
 OR LEARNING MENTOR?  
 OR ANCILLAR?  
 OR AUXILIAR?  
 OR PARAPROFESSIONAL?  
 OR TEACHING ASSISTANT?

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OR CLASSROOM ASSISTANT?

OR SUPPORT STAFF?

OR LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT?

OR SUPPORT ASSISTANT?

### ***AEI***

SCHOOL?

AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ASSISTANT?

OR CURRICULUM SUPPORT?

OR TEACHER AID?

OR EDUCATIONAL THERAPIST?

OR PARAEDUCATOR?

OR BILINGUAL ASSISTANT?

OR HELPER?

OR CHILDRENS LIBRARIAN?

OR SCHOOL LIBRARIAN?

OR VOLUNTEER?

OR LEARNING MENTOR?

OR ANCILLAR?

OR AUXILIAR?

OR PARAPROFESSIONAL?

OR TEACHING ASSISTANT?

OR CLASSROOM ASSISTANT?

OR SUPPORT STAFF?

OR LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT?

OR SUPPORT ASSISTANT?

NOT ADULT LEARNING

NOT HIGHER EDUC?

NOT UNIVERSIT?

### ***Psycinfo***

#15 ((school librarian\* or learning mentor\*) or (helper\* or children's librarian\*) or (paraeducator\* or bilingual assistant\*) or (psychoeducator\* or school volunteer\*) or (teacher aid\* or educational therapist\*) or (teaching aid\* or teaching coach\*) or (special educational needs assistant\* or curriculum support\*) or (class aid\* or classroom aid\*) or (learning support assistant\* or support assistant\*) or (        assistant\* or support staff\*) or (paraprofessional\* or teaching assistant\*) or (ancillar\* or auxiliar\*)) and ((education\* or school\* or

classroom\*) in de)

#14 (school librarian\* or learning mentor\*) or (helper\* or children's librarian\*) or (paraeducator\* or bilingual assistant\*) or (psychoeducator\* or school volunteer\*) or (teacher aid\* or educational therapist\*) or (teaching aid\* or teaching coach\*) or (special educational needs assistant\* or curriculum support\*) or (class aid\* or classroom aid\*) or (learning support assistant\* or support assistant\*) or (classroom assistant\* or support staff\*) or (paraprofessional\* or teaching assistant\*) or (ancillar\* or auxiliar\*)

#13 (education\* or school\* or classroom\*) in de

#12 psychoeducator\* or school volunteer\*

#11 teaching aid\* or teaching coach\*

#10 class aid\* or classroom aid\*

#9 learning support assistant\* or support assistant\*

#8 classroom assistant\* or support staff\*

#7 paraprofessional\* or teaching assistant\*

#6 ancillar\* or auxiliar\*

#5 school librarian\* or learning mentor\*

#4 helper\* or children's librarian\*

#3 paraeducator\* or bilingual assistant\*

#2 teacher aid\* or educational therapist\*

#1 special educational needs assistant\* or curriculum support\*

### ***ISI Web of Science***

#16 #15 and #16

#15 TS=(school\*)

#14 #2 or #3 or #4 or #5 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 or #10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14

#13 TS=(psychoeducator\* or school volunteer\*)

#12 TS=(teaching aid\* or teaching coach\*)

#11 TS=(class aid\* or classroom aid\*)

#10 TS=(learning support assistant\* or support assistant\*)

#9 TS=(classroom assistant\* or support staff\*)

#8 TS=(teaching assistant\*)

#7 TS=(paraprofessional\*)

#6 TS=(school ancillar\* or school auxiliar\*)

#5 TS=(school helper\* or children's librarian\*)

#4 TS=(paraeducator\* or bilingual assistant\*)

#3 TS=(teacher aid\* or educational therapist\*)

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#2 TS=(school librarian\* or learning mentor\*)

#1 TS=(special educational needs assistant\* or curriculum support\*)

DocType=All document types; Language=English; Database(s)=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A and HCI;  
Timespan=1981-2004

### ***ArticleFirst***

'special educational needs assistant\*

or 'volunteer+'

or 'curriculum support+'

or 'teacher aid\*\*'

or 'paraeducator+'

or 'bilingual assistant+'

or 'school helper+'

or 'learning mentor+'

or 'ancillar\*\*'

or 'auxiliar\*\*'

or 'paraprofessional+'

or 'teaching assistant+'

or 'classroom assistant+'

or 'support staff+'

or 'learning support assistant+'

or 'support assistant+'

or 'class aid\*\*'

or 'classroom aid\*\*'

or 'teaching aid\*\*'

or 'teaching coach\*\*'

or 'psychoeducator+'

or 'nursery nurse+'

and 'school+'

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## Appendix 2.3: Journals handsearched

For handsearching, five journals were identified by members of the Review and Advisory Groups and all volumes accessible through the associated libraries of Bishop Grosseteste College, Newman College and University of Leicester were handsearched. The following journals were scrutinised in this way by members of the Review Group:

*Education 3-13*

*British Journal of Special Education*

*British Educational Research Journal*

*Educational Research*

*Support for Learning*

*British Journal of Educational Studies*

*Teaching and Teacher Education*

## APPENDIX 2.4 EPPI-Centre keyword sheet, including review-specific keywords

### V0.9.7 Bibliographic details and/or unique identifier

#### A1. Identification of report

Citation .....  
 Contact .....  
 Handsearch .....  
 Unknown .....  
 Electronic database (please specify) .....

#### A2. Status

Published .....  
 In press .....  
 Unpublished .....

#### A3. Linked reports

*Is this report linked to one or more other reports in such a way that they also report the same study?*

Not linked .....  
 Linked (please provide bibliographical details and/or unique identifier) .....

#### A4. Language (please specify)

.....

#### A5. In which country/countries was the study carried out? (please specify)

.....  
 .....  
 .....

#### A6. What is/are the topic focus/foci of the study?

Assessment .....  
 Classroom management .....  
 Curriculum\* .....  
 Equal opportunities .....  
 Methodology .....  
 Organisation and management .....  
 Policy .....  
 Teacher careers .....  
 Teaching and learning .....  
 Other (please specify) .....

#### A7. Curriculum

Art .....  
 Business studies .....  
 Citizenship .....  
 Cross-curricular .....  
 Design and technology .....  
 Environment .....  
 General .....  
 Geography .....  
 Hidden .....  
 History .....  
 ICT .....

Literacy - first language .....  
 Literacy further languages .....  
 Literature .....  
 Maths .....  
 Music .....  
 PSE .....  
 Physical education .....  
 Religious education .....  
 Science .....  
 Vocational .....  
 Other (please specify) .....

#### A8. Programme name (please specify)

.....

#### A9. What is/are the population focus/foci of the study?

Learners .....  
 Senior management .....  
 Teaching staff .....  
 Non-teaching staff .....  
 Other education practitioners .....  
 Government .....  
 Local education authority officers .....  
 Parents .....  
 Governors .....  
 Other (please specify) .....

#### A10. Age of learners (years)

0-4 .....  
 5-10 .....  
 11-16 .....  
 17-20 .....  
 21 and over .....

#### A11. Sex of learners

Female only .....  
 Male only .....  
 Mixed sex .....

#### A12. What is/are the educational setting(s) of the study?

Community centre .....  
 Correctional institution .....  
 Government department .....  
 Higher education institution .....  
 Home .....  
 Independent school .....  
 Local education authority .....  
 Nursery school .....  
 Post-compulsory education institution .....  
 Primary school .....  
 Pupil referral unit .....  
 Residential school .....  
 Secondary school .....  
 Special needs school .....  
 Workplace .....  
 Other educational setting (please specify) .....

#### A13. Which type(s) of study does this report describe?

A. Description .....  
 B. Exploration of relationships .....  
 C. Evaluation .....  
     a. naturally-occurring .....  
     b. researcher-manipulated .....  
 D. Development of methodology .....  
 E. Review .....  
     a. Systematic review .....  
     b. Other review .....

## Review-specific keywords

The Review Team identified eight review-specific keywords that it applied to the 145 studies in the systematic map. It was important to identify which stakeholders' perceptions were reported in each study (A.2 below): headteachers, teachers, teaching assistants, pupils or parents.

A.1 What is the status of the teaching assistants (paid, unpaid, volunteer)?

A.2 Which stakeholder perceptions are reported (headteachers, teachers, teaching assistants, pupils or parents)?

A.3 Who is support offered to (individuals, groups or whole class)?

A.4 What is the reason for support (general, SEN, disability)?

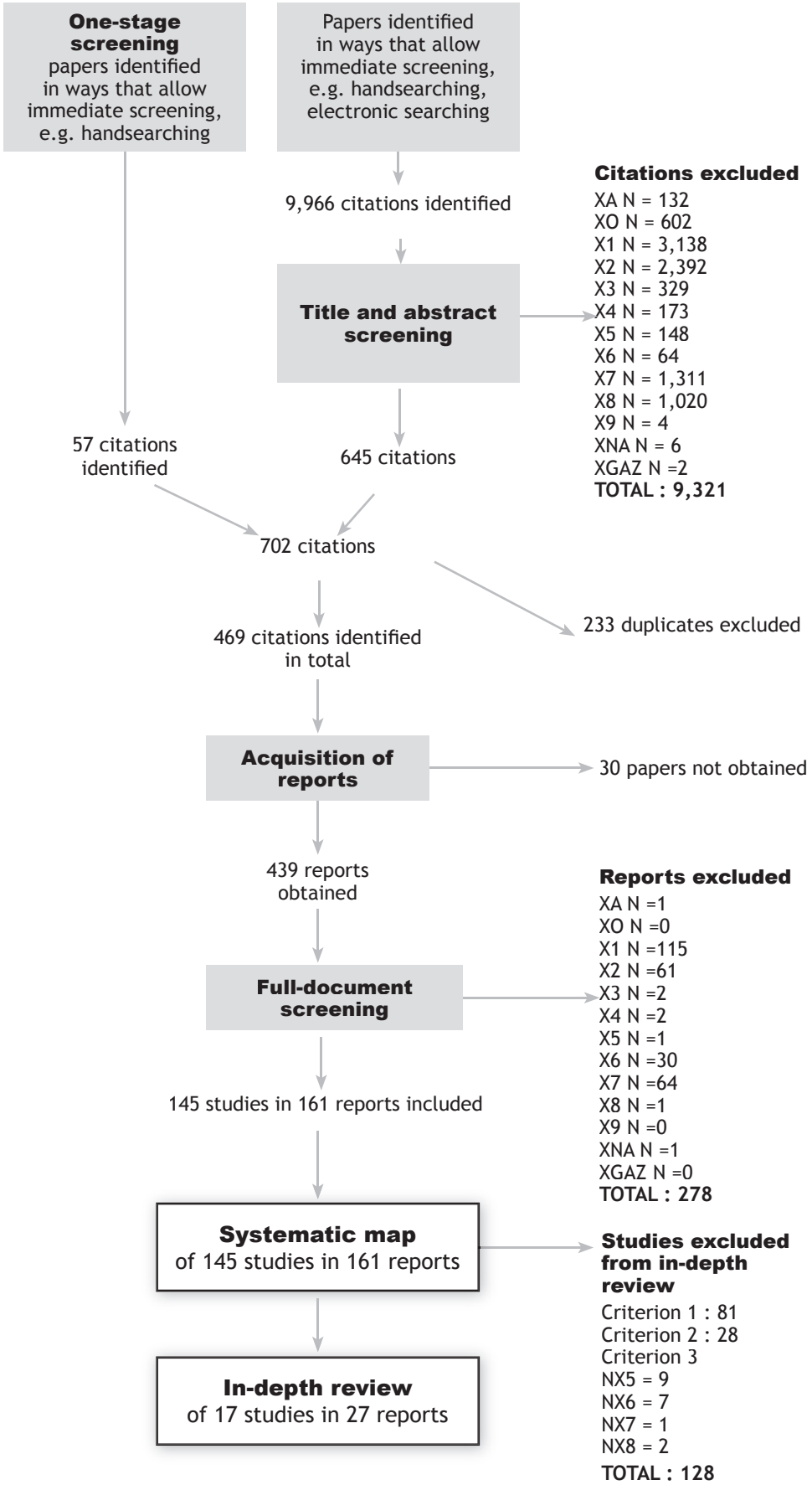
A.5 Type of engagement involved (academic, social or both)

A.6 Type of method used to collect perceptions/views in study (e.g. interviews)

A.7 What term is used to describe teaching assistants (e.g. teaching aide; teaching assistant; learning support assistant)?

A.8 What is the age of the students the teaching assistants are involved with? (Tick all that apply.)

# Appendix 3.1: Figure 3.1 1970-2003



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## Appendix 3.2: Post-2003 studies of TAs in primary schools

A number of important studies have been conducted in schools in the UK since 2003, when the British government began its remodelling of the teacher workforce. At least one of these would have been included in an updated version of the study of primary school teaching assistants (Cajkler et al., 2006).

**Blatchford et al. (2004)** have continued their long-term study of the role and effects of teaching assistants in English primary schools (DfES, 2004). Perceptions reported in this study include the fact TAs believe that interactions with pupils dominate their work (p 26). Their direct support for pupils is now far more important than indirect support by doing routine tasks to help out the teacher (e.g. resource management). In short, their role as 'supporters of pupils' learning' has, they perceive, grown dramatically (p 27). Teachers, on the other hand, see the effects on teachers and teaching more strongly than on learners (p 37). TAs reinforce learning and engage in process that involve 'repetition, practice, reiteration and consolidation' (p 37). In this sense, they have a much less initiating role than teachers. In primary school, TAs now offer significant support for the development of literacy and numeracy, a perception supported by headteachers as well as teachers. Blatchford et al. (p 53) conducted systematic observations of interactions in classroom-based activities and found evidence for beneficial effects of TA involvement. They believe that there are beneficial effects on teacher-pupil interactions from the presence of TAs, in that they help to maximise attention to work.

*The results were consistent in showing effects of TAs on teacher-pupil interactions. There was more active interaction with the teacher when a TA was present, which means more times when the pupil initiated contact, responded to the teacher, or was involved in sustained interaction with the teacher that extended over and beyond the time interval. There was also evidence that when a TA was present, pupils were more likely to be the focus of attention, that is, there was*

*more individualized teacher attention when the TA was present. Conversely, there were more times when the child was in an 'audience' role, that is, when the teacher was attending to another child in the class or group, or all children equally, when the TA was not present. This further confirms the greater likelihood of a passive role for the pupil when the TA is not present. (Blatchford et al., 2004, p 51)*

The report's findings suggest that TAs have an energising role in primary classrooms, that they contribute to keeping everyone on task, and that teachers 'rely on the work of TAs to support the pupils most in need' (p 55).

Pupils recognise the benefits of additional adults in the classroom (p 58). However, the quality of interactions was not a subject of this research, so we cannot yet be sure what characterises quality in interactions between TAs and pupils. Blatchford et al. (p 65) repeat their 2002 view that thorough investigation of TA involvements, including their interactions with pupils, is overdue. They argue that the contribution of TAs is predominantly direct, in significant interactions with pupils. Their role is now predominantly pedagogical (p 68), although, at a number of points, the authors point that the nature of their pedagogical contribution is not well articulated.

**Thomas et al. (2004)** have evaluated the School Workforce Pilot project, the forerunner to remodelling that involves TAs and HLTAs supporting the work of teachers in both primary and secondary schools. They investigated response to changes in working practices and approaches to implementation of the change, as well as levels of satisfaction in a number of schools. The project involved a number of initiatives, one of which relates to the deployment of TAs to cover routine tasks. Four special, 16 primary and 12 secondary schools were involved. Most teachers agreed that working with TAs meant they could spend more time on teaching (p xxvi). Teachers in secondary schools were less

positive (p xxxi) than those in primary and special schools. A number of case studies are reported with perceptions of benefit generally reported (e.g. in improvements to the environment of a school, pp lviii-lix).

After much debate by reviewers, the study was not included for in-depth analysis as the perceptions were rather general and the focus on the study was on the process of change, rather than on describing teaching assistants' contributions to academic and social engagement. However, this was one of the studies where the reviewers found EPPI-methodology difficult to apply as the report clearly contains some perceptions about TA contributions to academic engagement, but these were not deemed central in this report. Since the focus was principally on the effects on teacher workload, it was finally agreed that the work would be excluded from in-depth review. For example, in one case study (Meadow School), it was believed that changes in TA practice had had a positive effect, but the role of the teacher remained the key one. Some positive pupil perceptions were reported:

*The teacher has a helper teacher and this is a new thing.*

*The teaching assistant can take over if the teacher is away, but only the teacher can work with us all and can control us, tell us our work and give us our targets.*

*(Thomas et al., 2004, p lxiv)*

The overall conclusions to the study are that teacher working hours had been reduced, but this varied between school types, and that TAs had become more prominent in some schools (p c). Schools in the project had found new ways of working and part of this related to more effective contributions of TAs in schools. This is an important and informative study.

There have been other studies related to remodelling for example a UNISON staff survey on the growing role of teaching assistants' (Unison, 2004). Again after much deliberation, this was not included for in-depth review because it did not include descriptions of activities in which TAs engage to contribute to social and academic engagement. The report indicates that only 3.6% of schools have no TAs (p 6), although 15.6% secondary schools reported no use of TAs. Despite this, secondary schools reported increasing use of learning mentors, clearly growing rapidly. The report confirms that work with small groups and individuals is the most common contribution identified as offered by TAs. On the other hand, more than 20% of schools now use teaching assistants to provide short-term cover, presumably for absent or otherwise-engaged teachers (p 8).

Interest in the work of TAs is not confined to large funded projects in the UK. Small-scale studies have been undertaken to inform local developments: for example, the work of Durrant and Kramer in Worcestershire which is an impact assessment of

workforce reform. Again, there was discussion as to whether the study should be incorporated for in-depth review but the study was received very late (September 2005) and it was finally agreed that there was perhaps not enough description of perceptions of what TAs actually do to warrant inclusion. In addition, we could not be sure of the balance between reports from primary and secondary schools, although questionnaires were sent to all. Nevertheless, the study is informative confirming in a table on page 7 that the following are perceived as significant contributions:

- work with small groups and individuals on tasks
- keeping children on task
- developing pupils' social skills
- helping the inclusion of all children
- supporting literacy and numeracy
- providing feedback to teachers
- raising the self-esteem of children by showing interest in what they do
- behaviour management (but much less than the above)

Freeing teachers from routine tasks, while important, was a less frequently perceived contribution than more direct contributions to pupils' learning (Durrant and Kramer, 2004, p 9). These confirmed the findings of our first review (Cajkler et al., 2006) and, though small-scale, the study of teaching assistant work in Worcestershire is a good contribution to our understanding of this important part of the school workforce.

## APPENDIX 4.1 Details of studies included in the in-depth review

Bowers T (1997) Supporting special needs in the mainstream classroom: children's perceptions of the adult role

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
<p>This is a descriptive study.</p> <p>'to determine the types of explanations which children made for the presence of additional adults in the classroom. In particular, it was intended to examine the extent to which those explanations embraced 'need' on the part of a child or children, or on the part of the teacher.' (p 221)</p>	128 secondary children	<p>Group interview</p> <p>'Responses were individually written on a proforma response sheet' (p 221).</p>	<p>Descriptive accounts were given to basic data.</p> <p>'Responses were coded by allocating data to categories using the approach suggested for ethnographic research by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983)' (p 221).</p>	<p>PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT Helping pupils in general; mediating learning / curriculum (pupils)</p> <p>Helping specific children with needs (pupils)</p> <p>INCLUSION</p> <p>Managing behaviour / disciplining (pupils)</p> <p>Cocoon: protecting children from learning challenges and integrating with peers (pupils, by inference)</p> <p>CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEACHERS</p> <p>Helping or supporting teachers (e.g. in class or with routine task to enable teacher to concentrate on teaching) (pupils) (4)</p>	<p>It appears that the amount of contact with learning support staff decreased as pupils moved from infants to juniors and was similarly marked when they attended secondary school. In describing the distinction between the provision of help for the teacher and for the pupil, it appears that younger pupils tended to explain the presence of additional adults in the classroom in terms of an over-worked or less than optimally effective teacher. For older pupils, help was seen as pupil-focused, whereby help was given to those identified as needing something different from, or in addition to, what the bulk of the class received.</p> <p>Most of the recipients of support enjoyed, appreciated or valued support. There were, however, consistent responses from a minority who saw support as somehow singling a student out as different.</p> <p>There was also a sense, from some of the responses, of 'out-group denigration'. For some, one of these groups consisted of those singled out for attention on account of their special needs, while others felt that the 'out-group' were the visiting teachers who were in some way not 'real' teachers or were learning to be teachers. This suggested that, for some, in-class proximity did not necessarily achieve full inclusion.</p> <p>Finally, it is suggested that further work could be done in order to examine what discriminates between the classroom where additional adults are accepted, welcomed and valued and that where their presence is resented and may lead to barriers to inclusion (p 229).</p>

Ebersold S T (2003) Inclusion and mainstream education: an equal cooperation system

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
<p>This is a descriptive study.</p> <p>The study seeks to identify some of the features contributing to the coherence of mainstream schooling, and to the quality of the guidance offered to assistants.</p> <p>The study sought to analyse the preparatory work to support the disabled child during his/her school life and to facilitate their acceptance in the classroom. It investigated a range of factors, including the assistants' level of integration in the classroom and the satisfaction of stakeholders concerning the assistants' work.</p> <p>p. 91</p>	<p>61 TAs</p> <p>62 teachers</p> <p>51 parents</p>	One-to-one interview	Factorial analysis (Cibois, 1985) was used on the questionnaires	<p>PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Adapting pedagogy to needs of pupils (teachers/parents/general)</p> <p>Helping pupils in general mediators of learning/curriculum (TAs/teachers)</p> <p>Supporting learning; developing children's confidence and ability to learn; encouraging children by giving appropriate attention and interest to their activities (TAs/teachers)</p> <p>Helping small groups with tasks set by the teacher (including practical activities) (teachers)</p> <p>Helping individuals (including with tasks set by the teacher) (teacher)</p> <p>Improving /maintaining pupil motivation (teachers)</p> <p>Promoting independence/autonomy (TAs/teachers)</p> <p>Providing interaction opportunities in class (TAs)</p>	<p>The writer concludes that schooling for a child with an impairment is rarely a coherent 'collective action organised so as to equally involve the teacher, the parents and the assistant in the child's school life. Assistants are either left alone, obliged to shape for themselves their function, or placed in a relationship of subordination to the teacher, without recognition of their specific skills'. Thus, teachers remain at a distance, with the child's work delegated to the assistant. The result is uncertainty and frustration for participants. 'Thus one has to admit that the quality of support work, and of the links and relationships created, seems to consist less in meeting the child's needs than in those of one or more of the stakeholders.' (p 103)</p> <p>There needs to be a high degree of coherence and common focus to work to produce positive outcomes for children in mainstream education (p 103).</p> <p>Conclusions lead to a discussion that centre around the richness of cooperation. The different stakeholders are</p>

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
				<p>INCLUSION</p> <p>Mediating or facilitating social interaction with peers (TAs/teachers/parents)</p> <p>Securing inclusion/ overseeing integration (TAs/ teachers/parents) (28)</p> <p>CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEACHERS</p> <p>Helping/ supporting teachers (e.g. in class or with routine task to enable teacher to concentrate on teaching) (teachers)</p> <p>Giving feedback on progress to teachers (parents)</p> <p>STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS</p> <p>Teaching assistants: Important stakeholders in education process/ educators (TAs/teachers)</p> <p>Acting as bridge/intermediary between teacher and pupil: 'interface between parents, the teachers and the child' (Teachers/TAs)</p> <p>Link between teacher/school and parent (including home visiting) (TAs/parents)</p> <p>Giving feedback to parents (parents)</p> <p>Linking all stakeholders (TAs/general)</p>	<p>interdependent. Schooling practices cannot just be built around the child being in the centre of the practice (p 103) as this leads to the child being viewed 'only in the light of his/her difficulties' (p 104).</p> <p>The writer argues that successful inclusion requires schooling to be 'structured around an equal system of cooperation.'</p> <p>It is possible to define the key characteristics/conditions of such 'coherence': a need for stakeholders to work together according to contractual relationships; high quality preparatory work (involving the integration assistant and all stakeholders) is essential to successful mainstreaming of disabled children.</p> <p>There are conflicting views (especially between teachers and assistants) as to how roles, responsibilities and relations are perceived.</p>

Farrell P, Balshaw M, Polat F (1999) The management, role and training of learning support assistants

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
<p>This is a descriptive study.</p> <p>*to obtain the views of a range of stakeholders, including parents, teachers, senior staff in schools and LEAs, pupils and LSAs about their role in schools, the ways they are managed and supported, career structures and training opportunities'</p> <p>(p 2)</p>	<p>149 TAs</p> <p>113 teachers</p> <p>47 pupils</p> <p>35 pupils</p>	<p>Focus group</p> <p>One-to-one interview</p> <p>Observation</p>	<p>Qualitative data categorised and reported back in chapters 3-5; precise methodology for this is not made clear.</p>	<p>PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Supporting NLS or literacy development... Supporting language development (TAs/general)</p> <p>Helping individuals (including tasks set by the teacher) (general)</p> <p>Helping small groups with tasks set by the teacher (including practical activities) (general)</p> <p>Someone to turn to/helper (pupils)</p> <p>CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEACHERS</p> <p>Giving feedback on progress to teachers (TAs/general)</p> <p>Helping / supporting teachers (e.g. in class or with routine task to enable teacher to concentrate on teaching) (TAs/general)</p> <p>Contributing to individual education plans (TAs/teachers)</p> <p>Advising on with regard to cultural background (general)</p> <p>Planning programmes of work (general)</p>	<p>The evidence of this study suggests that there is a clearly understood distinction between the role of LSAs and teachers. In the particular context of pupils with special educational needs, teachers are responsible for the overall success of the teaching programmes; they plan the programmes, monitor their success, plan review meeting and liaise with parents. Meanwhile, LSAs are seen as being responsible for implementing the programmes under the teachers' guidance.</p> <p>LSAs tend to support pupils in mainstream classes by keeping regular contact with those who may need help but they do not sit with a pupil throughout a lesson unless s/he is working on a completely different curriculum activity from that of his/her peer group</p> <p>A wide variety of practices were observed in relation to withdrawing pupils from class for individual sessions. Teachers and LSAs adopted a flexible approach to this issue and were responsive to pupils' wishes.</p> <p>A consistent problem in the mainstream sites, in particular the non-resourced schools, was the lack of time for day-to-day planning meetings when the LSA could give feedback to and receive advice from the teacher.</p>

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
				Supervising the class (when required to allow T to concentrate on small group); whole class teaching (parents)	In mainstream primary schools LSAs were making a significant contribution in helping to implement the literacy hour.
				INCLUSION	In all sites LSAs undertook a range of extracurricular activities, often in out-of-school time.
				Securing inclusion/ overseeing integration (TAs; heads; parents)	All teachers and managers were very positive about the work of LSAs in schools and classrooms.
				Managing behaviour (parents/ general)	Parents and pupils understand the respective roles of LSAs and teachers.
				STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS	The vast majority of LSAs are extremely enthusiastic about their job, despite reservations about their conditions of service, and most do not want to be teachers. (p 24)
				Giving feedback to parents (parents)	The following conclusions or recommendations are drawn out from the findings:
				Link between teacher/ school and parent (including home visiting) (parents)	
				Teaching assistants: important stakeholders in education process/ educators (general)	
					'The job title for staff working in schools and classrooms to support pupils should be the same. For reasons stated earlier in this report we prefer the term Learning Support Assistants which should be applied to all classroom and support assistants working in schools and not be restricted to those who work with pupils who have special needs' (p 71).

Hemmingsson h, H, Borell L, Gustavsson A (2003) Participation in school: school assistants creating opportunities and obstacles for pupils with disabilities					
Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
<p>This study focuses on exploration of relationships.</p> <p>'The current explorative study focuses on how assistance is provided in school to pupils with physical disabilities and how the assistants influence pupils' participation' (p 89).</p>	<p>7 TAs &amp; teachers</p> <p>7 pupils</p>	<p>One-to-one interview</p> <p>Informal interviews and semi-structured interviews were carried out with children and teaching assistants.</p> <p>Observation was carried out during class and in some breaks.</p>	<p>A constant comparative method was used. All data accumulated were read several times and then coded in a line-by-line analysis</p>	<p>PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Adapting pedagogy to needs of pupils (including lessons or materials) (general)</p> <p>Helping pupils in general; mediating learning/ curriculum (general)</p> <p>Helping individuals (including tasks set by the teacher) (general)</p> <p>Interpreting (instructions/ language/ worksheets); translating language (general)</p> <p>Post-tutoring (to re-enforce teaching) (general)</p> <p>Supporting learning; developing children's confidence and ability to learn; encouraging children by giving appropriate attention and interest to their activities (general)</p> <p>Providing interaction opportunities in class (general)</p> <p>Promoting independence/ autonomy (general)</p>	<p>'This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of interventions in the school setting to enhance participation by pupils with disabilities. Therefore, the study is relevant for occupational therapists, teachers, and assistants. The findings have implications for the development of flexible assistance tailored to pupils with disabilities. One implication from our study is that one must have an awareness of the ambiguity of facilitating participation if one is to be able to organize and plan a flexible assistant role that might give priority to learning participation in some situations and social participation in others. Being aware of how the position of the assistant's seating guided the behaviour of both the assistant and the pupil might also be helpful when planning assistance.</p> <p>'Further, it is important to consider that pupils may avoid help if it threatens social participation. There is not only a dilemma between what support is most beneficial, but also a strong need to understand the pupils' own priorities for social participation. Support to promote the participation of pupils with physical disabilities in school has to involve the pupils in the decisions governing how the assistance is provided and must take account of the pupils' perspective to ensure that social participation is not threatened by the help provided.' (p 97)</p>

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
				INCLUSION  Mediating or facilitating social interaction with peers (TAs and general)  Securing inclusion/ overseeing integration (general)  Catering for pastoral needs (general)  Cocoon: protecting children from learning challenges and integrating with peers (general)  Acting as bridge / intermediary between teacher and pupil: 'interface between parents, the teachers and the child' (general)  CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEACHERS  Helping / supporting teachers (e.g. in class or with routine task to enable teacher to concentrate on teaching) (general)	

MENCAP, (1999) On a wing and a prayer: inclusion and children with severe learning difficulties (research report conducted by Learning Difficulties Team of the University of Birmingham, led by Dr Penny Lacey

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
'MENCAP has carried out this research to examine how LSAs can support the inclusive learning of pupils with SLD and PMLD and to identify good practice in the classroom. The research was carried out in 24 schools which demonstrated different approaches to inclusive education and which provided a breadth and depth of good practice.' (p 7)	43 LSAs 25 teachers 30 parents (23 mothers, 7 fathers) 7 pupils	One-to-one interview (face to face or by phone) Lesson observations	Some elementary statistical analysis was done on answers from structured interview questions, given in appendices 5-7. Otherwise, quotations were selected to illustrate points made; it is not clear how those quotations were selected.	PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT  Adopting pedagogy to needs of people (pupils, not clear, TAs, parents x 2)  Helping pupils in general mediators of learning / curriculum (pupils, teachers, TAs x 2, parents)  Helping small groups with tasks set by the teacher (teachers, TAs not clear x 2)  Helping specific children with needs (parents)  Helping individuals (including tasks set by the teacher) (teachers, TAs x 2)  Interpreting (instructions/ language/ worksheets) translating language (not clear)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Everyone interviewed felt that pupils with SLD and PMLD were being included or integrated to meet needs that were social rather than educational. LSAs felt this more strongly than the other two groups. Teachers identified more academic needs than the other two groups. Both parents and LSAs felt that pupils' independence was important, but there were only two mentions by teachers of this aspect. (p 12)</li> <li>Pupils said that their LSAs taught them and helped them. They expanded on this with examples of helping with paints/cutting/ cooking/singing/writing/maths. (p 13)</li> <li>As a summary of their work, teachers and LSAs said that LSAs assist the teacher and/or teach; support individual pupils; work with a group of pupils; work with all the pupils in the class; offer general support (p 14).</li> <li>LSAs and teachers agreed on the balance of work carried out by LSAs. Working with a group of pupils was mentioned more often than working with an individual pupil, although most teachers and LSAs mentioned both these duties. Even when LSAs were allocated to specific pupils, they also worked with groups. This was generally felt to be a more effective way of developing relationships. (p 14)</li> <li>During lessons, LSAs' tasks appear to fall into the following four main categories: promoting inclusion or integration; teaching and promoting learning; and overseeing pastoral, personal and social education (p 14).</li> </ul>

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LSAs promote inclusion or integration by helping relationships (for example, by encouraging interaction between pupils and interpreting pupils' attempts to communicate); encouraging independent interaction (for example, by watching from a distance, withdrawing when they can). (p 14)</li> <li>LSAs teach and promote learning by explaining and adapting work (for example, by repeating the teacher's explanations and instructions using a simpler vocabulary); supporting the pupils and helping to give them access to lessons (for example, by providing suitable equipment, prompting and encouraging pupils); waiting for their responses and interpreting them where necessary; and working directly on individual targets or specific aspects of the National Curriculum (p 15).</li> <li>LSAs oversee pastoral, personal and social education by meeting the physical and pastoral needs of pupils (for example, toileting, assisting at meal times, offering emotional support); ensuring physical safety (for example, in the playground); and reminding pupils about behaviour (p 15).</li> <li>LSAs plan and prepare work by planning and preparing lessons or the part their pupil will play in the lesson; helping to set objectives for individual education plans (IEPs); setting up activities or resources before a lesson; and making resources (p 17).</li> <li>LSAs' experiences (with respect to planning): some have complete responsibility for planning for individual pupils; some are consulted on or help with planning; some work from teachers' plans; some have no chance to pre-plan, so plan</li> </ul>

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
					<p>'on the hoof'; and some are not involved in planning at all and just respond to teacher directions (p 17).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LSAs record pupils' work and report back by daily or weekly recording (for example, through writing observations of lessons, a summary at the end of the week or recording details in the home-school book); and writing progress reports (for example, at the end of a module or scheme of work or for a pupil's annual review) (p 19).</li><li>• LSAs liaise with a variety of people: for example, staff of other schools, especially if the involvement is with an integration link between a special school and a mainstream school; other staff, particularly the teachers of the inclusion and integrated lessons; parents, either in person or through the home-school book; other professionals, for example, the physiotherapist (p 19).</li><li>• More LSAs mentioned working with groups of children than mentioned working with individuals. Some of these responses came from LSAs assigned to one child. In these cases, although the LSA was designated for one child and did work individually with that child, they did not want to isolate him or her and felt that they could work most effectively with a small group. Some LSAs said that they made sure that the targeted child was able to cope and then went to help other children. (p 20)</li><li>• A surprising number of comments were made about activities which fell into the general categories of teaching and promoting learning. It was clear that LSAs felt that both of these were an important part of their job. They were also attending to pastoral and social needs; and were</li></ul>

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
					<p>deliberately promoting inclusion, sometimes through being there (to help with communication) and sometimes by not being there (to encourage independence). (p 20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With regard to managing the inclusion and integration, the duties or LSAs had many similarities across schools but there were some areas where there were great differences in the amount of involvement they had. The greatest difference between the schools lay in the area of planning and preparation. (p 20)</li> <li>• Difficulties in implementing good practice came in four main areas: inclusion in principle; communicating and planning; the role of the LSA; and working with pupils (p 20).</li> <li>• The question 'What makes an ideal LSA?' led to very full answers from most LSAs. As so many of the LSAs were untrained and had little experience before they started their jobs, it is not surprising that personal qualities were regarded as more important than skills, knowledge and experience. Most indicated that training could be gained while in post and that most schools provided this. (p 23)</li> <li>• The qualities most mentioned by LSAs and teachers were adaptability and willingness to learn. These were felt to be very important when people are likely to be working in several different classrooms with several different teachers. Good communication and the ability to relate to, and understand, others were also felt to be important when working with several people. LSAs and teachers both also mentioned the importance of LSAs knowing when to step in or step back. (p 23)</li> </ul>

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The need 'to be born an LSA' was voiced more than once, implying that, although there are skills to be gained, the most important aspect of being an LSA is related to the possession of the 'right personal qualities' (p 23).</li><li>• Most teachers were very appreciative of the majority of LSAs, suggesting that integration and inclusion would not be possible without them (p 23).</li><li>• On being asked about the role of LSAs in the inclusion or integration of their children, parents were generally very appreciative of what they did and recognised the importance of an extra adult to the process (p 26).</li><li>• The 18 parents who felt they could comment on the kind of support LSAs gave to their children cited similar duties to those mentioned by the teachers and LSAs-teaching, promoting inclusion and learning, pastoral, personal and social education and managing inclusion (p 26).</li><li>• It is evident from the interviews with parents that many of them are not clear how inclusion is being managed for their child (p 26).</li><li>• Few parents had anything to say about what was needed for the LSA to carry out their job effectively, although five of the nine comments made about this related to the importance of training (p 26).</li></ul>

Moran A, Abbott L (2002) Developing inclusive schools: the pivotal role of teaching assistants in promoting inclusion in special and mainstream schools in Northern Ireland(1999)

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
<p>This is a descriptive study.</p> <p>'This paper, focused on the roles and responsibilities of teaching assistants.'</p> <p>(p 163)</p>	<p>11 heads (of whom 5 were primary mainstream and 2 appeared to be from post-primary unites).</p>	<p>One-to-one interview</p>	<p>'The data were analysed under the main headings to detect patterns of opinion, and to illustrate the experiences and views of the respondents' (p 165).</p>	<p>PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Adapting pedagogy to needs of pupils (differentiation) (headteachers)</p> <p>Helping pupils in general; Mediating learning / curriculum (headteachers)</p> <p>Helping specific children with needs (headteachers)</p> <p>Helping small groups with tasks set by the teacher (including practical activities) (headteachers)</p> <p>Helping individuals (including tasks set by the teacher) (headteachers)</p> <p>Interpreting (instructions/language/worksheets); translating language (headteachers)</p> <p>Supporting learning; developing children's confidence and ability to learn; encouraging children by giving appropriate attention and interest to their activities (headteachers)</p> <p>Someone to turn to / helper (headteachers)</p> <p>Promoting independence/autonomy (headteachers)</p> <p>Improving / maintaining pupil motivation (headteachers)</p>	<p>The writers conclude by drawing on the work of previous studies. 'For the teacher 'who becomes skilled at training and deploying the right person as classroom assistant in what has been called their 'unique functions and responsibilities' (Fletcher-Campbell, 1992, p 141), the benefits of an extra pair of hands and an extra pair of eyes can be immense (McGarvey et al., 1996). Good practice by teaching assistants includes fostering the social and academic participation, and hence inclusion, of all pupils, enabling them to become more independent learners, and helping to raise standards of achievement (see DfEE, 2000, p 9). Thus, 'the most fundamental aspect of the development of schools that are effective in meeting the needs of all children is the way teachers and assistants together consider teaching and learning processes and the strategies used in the management of the classroom to support these' (Balshaw, 1999, p 22).' (p 171)</p>

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
				<p>INCLUSION</p> <p>Securing inclusion / overseeing integration (headteachers)</p> <p>Mediating or facilitating social interaction with peers (headteachers)</p> <p>Cocoon: protecting children from learning challenges and integrating with peers (headteachers)</p> <p>CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEACHERS</p> <p>Giving feedback on progress to teachers (headteachers)</p> <p>Maintaining / developing resources (headteachers)</p>	

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
<p>This is a descriptive study.</p> <p>To gather information on biographical characteristics of teaching assistants; the degree of support teachers received in classrooms; the basis on which TAs were deployed; opinions on the value of the support, and the levels of administrative support received by teachers</p>	<p>3,822 teachers (of whom 1,345 were secondary)</p>	<p>Self-completion questionnaire</p>	<p>Statistical analysis for categorical questions, and reproduction of free text</p>	<p>PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Assessing children's work/ contributing to assessment (teachers)</p> <p>Helping individuals (including tasks set by the teacher) (teachers)</p> <p>Helping small groups with tasks set by the teacher (including practical activities)</p> <p>Interpreting (instructions/language/ worksheets); translating language</p> <p>Supporting numeracy / maths</p> <p>Supporting NLS or literacy development... Supporting language development</p> <p>INCLUSION</p> <p>Securing inclusion/ overseeing integration</p> <p>Catering for pastoral needs</p> <p>Managing behaviour/discipliniers</p> <p>STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS</p> <p>Teaching assistants: important stakeholders in education process / educators</p> <p>CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEACHERS</p> <p>Supervising the class (when required to allow T to concentrate on small group); whole class teaching</p> <p>Helping / supporting teachers (e.g. in class or with routine task to enable teacher to concentrate on teaching)</p> <p>Maintaining / developing resources (13)</p>	<p>Government proposals for the increased use of TAs in schools need to take heed of teachers' concerns regarding the impact of those measures on teachers' sense of professionalism. Teachers value TAs for specific purposes, but see the expansion of their roles as threatening in some respects. An unforeseen consequence might be to exacerbate teacher shortages.</p> <p>'While most teachers have highly positive relationships with their TAs, the discussion raises cautions about the extension of TA recruitment to make up for shortfalls in teacher recruitment.</p> <p>The analogy made by the Government between the education and health services ignores differences in the type of decision-making and time-sensitivity of support in the two services. This makes delegation from doctors to nurses an inadequate precedent for delegation from teachers to TAs.</p> <p>'If TAs take over much of the most pleasurable aspect of the teachers' job, face-to-face work with children - potential teachers may choose to be TAs instead.' (p 4)</p>

O'Brien T, Garner P (2001) Untold stories: learning support assistants and their work

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
<p>This is a descriptive study.</p> <p>The authors sought to provide 'a forum for LSAs to tell their own tales' (p 5) about 'the work they currently do and the range of influences on the way they operated' (Garner, 2002, p 14). The authors were intent on securing a series of stories in which the 'voice of the LSA predominated' (Garner, 2002, p 14).</p>	Estimated 11 TAs (secondary)	<p>Focus group discussions (six to ten participants in three centres)</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews to construct accounts of LSA work</p> <p>Self-completion report or diary</p> <p>Written accounts followed a loosely structured framework.</p>	<p>Stories were transcribed and verified by participants (written accounts).</p>	<p>The LSA is a 'bona fide, committed and active contributor to the learning of all pupils and to the life of schools as organic and inclusive learning communities' (p 144).</p> <p>LSA support is now a core element of SEN provision; the range of their duties and responsibilities continues to increase. They see themselves 'as professionals with particular skills and attributes' (Garner, 2002, p 16).</p> <p>LSAs are seen as pivotal to inclusion but still regarded as second-class citizens (reflected in pay and conditions).</p> <p>STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS</p> <p>Acting as bridge / intermediary between teachers and pupils (TAs)</p> <p>Link between teacher/ school and parent (including Home visiting) (TAs)</p> <p>Giving feedback to parents (TAs)</p> <p>CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEACHERS</p> <p>Contributing to individual education plans (TAs)</p>	<p>The LSA is a 'bona fide, committed and active contributor to the learning of all pupils and to the life of schools as organic and inclusive learning communities' (p 144).</p> <p>LSA support is now a core element of SEN provision; the range of their duties and responsibilities continues to increase. They see themselves 'as professionals with particular skills and attributes' (Garner, 2002, p 16).</p> <p>LSAs are seen as pivotal to inclusion but still regarded as second-class citizens (reflected in pay and conditions).</p>

Shaw L (2001) Learning supporters and inclusion: roles, rewards, concerns, challenges

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
<p>This is a descriptive study.</p> <p>'The focus is on supporters' perspectives and the aim is to give a platform to what traditionally have been minority voices' (p 2).</p>	Unclear.	<p>One-to-one interview</p> <p>Observations of learning supporters' practice.</p>	<p>This is not discussed.</p>	<p>PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Helping small groups with tasks set by the teacher (including practical activities) (TAs)</p> <p>Supporting learning; developing children's confidence and ability to learn; encouraging children by giving appropriate attention and interest to their activities (TAs)</p> <p>INCLUSION</p> <p>Cocoon: protecting children from learning challenges and integrating with peers (TAs)</p> <p>Securing inclusion / overseeing integration (TAs/general)</p> <p>STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS</p> <p>Link between teacher / school and parent (including home visiting) (TAs/general)</p> <p>Teaching assistants: important stakeholders in education process/ educators/ (TAs/general) (6/9)</p>	<p>'What has emerged is a story of dedication and hard work, of a complex job which demands diverse skills and substantial qualities of character' (p 24).</p> <p>'The story of learning supporters as they tell it raises challenging issues about status and roles in the classroom and indicates a review of existing personnel structures. There is also a debate about whether an approach which sees supporters as a resource for all children rather than attached to named pupils can serve the interests of children with high level support needs.' (p 24)</p> <p>'Supporters' feelings of devaluation have been a clear and pivotal part of this report. Their feelings go beyond not being respected by some teachers to more generalised feelings of not being respected by society as a whole. Views of other members of school communities have not been covered in this report, though they need to be considered and taken into account.' (p 24)</p> <p>'The purpose of this report was to provide a platform for new voices. Supporters have put forward their agenda of main issues to be addressed as: pay and conditions, training, qualifications, working with pupils with high level support needs and working with teachers. CSIE recognises that that some progress has been made on these matters but that there is still a way to go to meet the aspirations of supporters as expressed in this report. It hopes the report will contribute to a dialogue between inclusion workers, whatever their professions or job titles, in which they listen to and learn from each other to find solutions which revalue supporters' roles without devaluing others.' (p 25)</p>

## Secondary only studies

Chambers GN and Pearson S (2004) Supported access to modern foreign language lessons

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
The project aimed to: analyse and evaluate the access of pupils with SEN to MFL lessons by focusing on the interactions between teachers, TAs and pupils; identify features of good practice in teacher-TA collaboration; use the outcomes to inform MFL teaching and TA training (p. 34).	Two heads of department, two SENCOS (we presume) 54 pupils Six classes were observed but we are unclear how many questionnaires were returned by teachers and TAs, until later in the article when results are presented (p 35). Mention is made of 'about 20 TAs' being in each school but we are not sure how many participated in the research. The findings section confirmed seven teachers and eight TAs participated.	With pupils: 12 interviews with groups of 4 to 6 With TAs/ teachers post-observation, discussions taperecorded for analysis Six lessons were recorded with two video cameras, one focusing on the teacher, one on the TA (p 34). Policy documents and individual education plans (IEPs).	The authors used the headings provided by Working With Teaching Assistants: A Good Practice Guide (DfEE, 2000) (p 35) Data from observations was reviewed with teachers and TAs; discussions were tape recorded for analysis but there are few details of the analysis: 'The researchers viewed the video material and identified some key issues for further discussion. The recordings were given back to the schools. The staff involved had the opportunity to view themselves in private before deciding whether to allow others to view the material.' 'They watched it as a group and, supported by a prompt sheet	PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT Assessing children's work / contributing to assessment (pupils) Helping pupils in general mediators of learning / curriculum (pupils) Helping small groups with tasks set by the teacher (pupils) Promoting independence / autonomy (TAs) Supporting learning / developing children's confidence and ability to learn encouraging children by giving appropriate attention and interest to their activities (pupils) Someone to turn to / helper (pupils) Acting as a distraction (pupils) INCLUSION AND SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS Mediating social interaction with other pupils / facilitating social interactions with peers (TAs) Managing behaviour / discipline (pupils)	'The findings appear to support the view that all parties perceived the presence of additional adults in these lessons positively and that there were many successful features in the way in which support operates. The views of the pupils largely corroborated those of the adults but also provided some valuable insights into their perception'. (p 40) 'A key to the positive relationship appeared to be shared view that support should not be narrowly conceived as relating to those pupils with SEN but, more broadly, in terms of establishing and maintaining a supportive climate for all. The support was universally viewed as existing for all pupils, shared between the adults and associated with teaching and learning. This is comparable with the DfEE (2008) view that there

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
			devised by the researchers, discussed their reactions and impressions. ' (p35)	<p>Cocoon protecting children from learning challenges and integrating with peers (TAs/teachers)</p> <p>SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS</p> <p>Giving feedback on progress to teachers (TAs/teachers)</p> <p>NEW PERCEPTIONS</p> <p>Setting good examples: acting as role model; modelling learning and behaviour (teachers/pupils)</p> <p>Co-learning with pupils; acting as a pseudo-pupil (TAs/teachers/not clear)</p> <p>Supporting all subjects (cross depts) (TAs)</p> <p>Helping maintain a supportive climate for all (not clear)</p> <p>Working in one subject area (TAs)</p>	<p>are four strands to the support a TA provides: support of the teachers; and support for the school'. (p 40)</p> <p>'However, these teachers and TAs rejected this view and had found ways to turn this to the advantage of the pupils. The TAs were modelling learning activities for the pupils, were perceived to be enthusiastic language learners and were demonstrating their own success in the target language. Acting as a 'pseudo-pupil' was not, in these two schools, a negative or distracting activity but rather adopted as an effective teaching strategy.' (p 40)</p> <p>Their view, fully supported by the researchers, was that maximising the impact of in-class support is dependent upon, and merits an investment in, time and training, both joint and separate. One of the pupils talking about the TA commended 'She likes me to do it - because I am capable'. Teachers and TAs need to feel confident within their working relationship and that cannot be left solely to chance. (p 40)</p> <p>There is also some interspersed discussion about how TAs should be deployed. One TA said 'I am lucky to be in a Year 7 group', enabling her to learn German with the pupils. (p 38)</p>

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
					'The researchers have found that this is an area that stimulates interesting and even heated debate at conferences and in-service events. Is it a good or a bad thing for the TA to learn alongside the pupils? Is this distracting her from what she is employed to do? Or does she act as a role model for the pupils? Does this encourage the pupils to have a go? Or, when she is reading aloud, for example, is she denying a pupil the time and opportunity to read aloud? In our experience, audiences are very divided and polarised on this issue; sitting on the fence appears not to be an option (see Chambers, Hall and Pearson, 2002).' (p 38)

Golze S (2002) Perceptions of support staff: how they see themselves and how others see them

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
<p>The paper explores the views of support staff and to a limited extent school governors in four specific areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• perceptions over time</li> <li>• development of support staff roles and skills</li> <li>• training</li> <li>• in-school communication</li> </ul> <p>'This research is prompted by the attempt in recent years to develop the roles and perceptions of the support staff' (p 39).</p> <p>'In this shortened report the main emphasis is on the findings of support staff's self-perceptions. A brief mention is made of the governors' views.</p>	<p>13 support staff (6 administrative, 5 technical, 1 teaching assistant)</p> <p>Not told how many governors replied to the questionnaire, nor how many questionnaires were sent out</p>	<p>Interviews were organised following the completion of questionnaires.</p> <p>Questionnaires were used with all participants.</p>	<p>Some extremely elementary statistical analysis was undertaken; also, key themes were collated and presented in lists, although in a manner not made explicit.</p>	<p>PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Helping pupils in general mediators of learning / curriculum (TAs)</p> <p>Supporting learning / developing children's confidence and ability to learn encouraging children by giving appropriate attention and interest to their activities (TAs)</p> <p>Improving / maintaining pupil motivation (TAs)</p> <p>Acting as a distraction (teachers)</p> <p>STAKEHOLDER LINKING</p> <p>Linking between teacher / school and parent (TAs)</p> <p>Important stakeholders in education process / educators (not clear)</p> <p>SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS</p> <p>Maintaining / developing resources (TAs)</p> <p>NEW PERCEPTIONS</p> <p>Setting good examples; acting as</p>	<p>'Support staff have a positive view of their roles and of themselves within the school; governors echo this perception. Generally, the teaching staff have a high regard for the support staff with the majority recognising the value of the support given. Many also recognised the skills and expertise within the support staff team. However, there were still some teaching staff who displayed a patronising attitude towards the support staff and some valued certain support staff more than others. The development of some of the support staff roles has led to a change in perception of individual support staff.' (p 44)</p> <p>'The research also shows that the support staff were not always seen by others as a team, but rather as a group of small teams. The support staff themselves shared this view.</p>

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate that progress has been made in involving the image of support personnel, by themselves and by others, over recent time and to highlight directions for further development.'				role model; modelling learning and behaviour (TAs)  Creating an efficient and pleasant environment (TAs)	<p>Although there were half-termly meetings of the whole support staff team, it was felt that at other times there was often no feeling of working together.' (p 44)</p> <p>Recommendations to the school management and governors arising from this research have included (p 44):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• producing a who's who of support staff for new staff during induction in a handbook style</li><li>• more involvement of support staff in staff meetings</li><li>• inclusion of support staff in the alternative curriculum experience week to enable teaching staff to see support staff in a different and more relaxed role</li><li>• further involvement in the training of teaching staff by support staff in their specialist areas</li><li>• demonstrations of their roles by support staff such as the examinations officer, finance officer and technicians to teaching staff to increase awareness</li><li>• encouragement of more individual team meetings within the support staff team as well as whole support staff meetings</li><li>• encouragement of the feeling that all support staff are part of the learning community</li></ul>

Jarvis J (2003) 'It's more peaceful without any support': What do deaf pupils think about the support they receive in mainstream schools?

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
The aim of the study is to ascertain what hearing-impaired pupils think of the learning support they receive.	83 young people took part in the study: 61 were hearing impaired and 22 hearing students.	22 deaf and 22 hearing pupils were involved in focus group discussions over a six-month period.  39 deaf pupils took part in one-to-one interviews.  Question and answer scenarios were employed; also, mind maps, repertory grids, discussions about pictures, role-play, puppets and the exploration of metaphors.  The author offers a description of the methods employed.	'The data collection methods produced a rich database that was analysed using computer software to identify key themes' (p 163).	PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT  Adopting pedagogy to needs of pupils (pupils)  Helping pupils in general mediators of learning/ curriculum x 4 (pupils)  Interpreting (instruction/ language/ worksheets)  Translating language (pupils)  Supporting learning / developing children's confidence and ability to learn encouraging children by giving appropriate attention and interest to their activities (pupils)  INCLUSION and SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS  Securing inclusion / overseeing integration (pupils)  Cocoon protecting children from learning challenges and integrating with peers (heads/ service managers)	Support for deaf pupils in mainstream schools is provided by a variety of individuals. 'Sensitive' support is seen to foster inclusion. It is important for pupils themselves to be involved in the support planning process. To understand better the support needs of pupils, it is important to listen to their views.  'Work undertaken by specialist teachers to raise the profile of deafness and to develop and inclusive school ethos is likely to have significant impact on the inclusion of deaf children. Practical strategies used consistently but unobtrusively by mainstream teachers can enable deaf pupils to access lessons more effectively. Specialist teaching and sensitive in-class support can enable increased academic inclusion. Planning for this support needs to involve pupils in order to be most effective and to support their developing independence.

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
				NEW PERCEPTIONS Providing support for writing activities ((pupils) Interfering with peer group relationships (pupils)	<p>This support needs to be monitored and opportunities need to be given for pupils to have input into this monitoring.' (p 168)</p> <p>'The importance of peers, for both social and academic inclusion, mirrors findings in other projects (Bearne, 2002) and suggests that a higher profile needs to be given to peer support and how this can be facilitated. Peer support can be given by other deaf pupils in the school while, for those who are individually included in their local school, opportunities for meeting with other deaf pupils need to be provided (Moore, Dash and Bristow, 1999). Hearing pupils need guidance on ways in which to communicate with deaf pupils, while deaf pupils need help to develop ways to manage communication breakdowns (Lloyd, 1999)' (p168)</p> <p>This study demonstrates 'the importance of staff and pupils having the opportunity to develop their understanding of the needs of individuals and how these can be met and that this must include listening to the views of pupils with special needs'.</p>

Jerwood L (1999) Using special needs assistants effectively					
Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
<p>Questions posed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are we trying to achieve in using special needs assistants?</li> <li>What role do they need to adopt?</li> <li>What do I need to do to achieve my goal? (p.127)</li> </ul>	7 SNAs	Discussion with the subject teachers and 'the progress of the teams was monitored in two subject areas each week': no further details given.	Assume a review of diaries, interview notes and other information and what appeared to be key points arising.	<p>PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>Assessing children's work / contributing to assessment (TAs).</p> <p>Helping pupils in general mediators of learning / curriculum (TAs/ not clear)</p> <p>STAKEHOLDER LINKING</p> <p>Important stakeholders in education process / educators (TAs)</p> <p>SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS</p> <p>Giving feedback on progress to teachers (TAs)</p> <p>Contributing to Individual Education Plans (TAs)</p> <p>NEW PERCEPTIONS</p> <p>Working in one subject (TAs)</p>	<p>Page 128-129: 'The advantages of attaching special needs assistants to faculty areas are mixed. On the one hand, working in a single subject area enabled assistants to improve their knowledge and confidence, and to strengthen their relationships with teachers. On the other, inconsistencies still remained in the setting of lesson aims and it appeared that for some teachers the role of the special needs assistant was still an afterthought. When lesson aims and the assistants' role are made clear, however, their attachment to faculty areas increases and enhances collaborative teamwork. At the start of the project, teachers were keen to have assistants attached to their faculties, although they were not given training in ways of managing additional adults in the classroom. Consequently, many did not consider ways of maximising this resource, and some lacked the skills necessary to motivate, to delegate and to manage the work of an extra adult.</p> <p>Although working in one subject area reduced the amount of information each assistant was required to absorb, the key to his or effectiveness was dependent on the individual teacher's management skills.</p>

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
					<p>Concerns remained about finding time to plan and to discuss lessons, and ways in which staff can be motivated to work collaboratively.</p> <p>'It could be argued that pupil-allocated special needs assistants could be equally as effectively as those working primarily in one subject area. The key to effective support appears to depend on a clarification of the assistant's role. If special needs assistants are to be truly effective, teachers must determine ways of using them and must increase their own classroom management-skills in order that the assistants' work in lessons is focused and proactive. The following process model is designed to maximise the benefits of using special needs assistants....</p> <p>'There is little doubt that a clear definition of roles, and collaborative teamwork contribute to the improved performance of special needs assistants, particularly when they are attached to individual subject areas. Although progress at Hardley School is evident, in the final analysis the quality of implementation will determine the true benefits of using special needs assistants in the classroom.'</p>

## Kerry CA (2002) Support staff as mentors: a case study of innovation

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
The article focuses on the innovative use of support staff as learning mentors in an 11-16 comprehensive school recently out of special measures.	Support staff/mentors = 3 (interviewed) Years 10 and 11 mentees = 4 Headteacher = 1 Support staff/mentees = 4 (questionnaires) Total = 12	Support staff/mentors = 3 (interviewed) Years 10 and 11 mentees = 4 Headteacher = 1 Support staff/mentees = 4 (questionnaires) Total = 12	It appears that key themes and issues were identified from the interviews and questionnaires. Direct quotes were taken from material (the interviews were taped and notes taken) for inclusion in the article.	PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT  Helping pupils in general mediators of learning / curriculum (pupils)  Supporting learning / developing children's confidence and ability to learn encouraging children by giving appropriate attention and interest to their activities (pupils)  Someone to turn to / helper (pupils)  Someone to turn to / helper (pupils)  Improving / maintaining pupil motivation (TAs/ pupils)  Listening to children (TAs)  INCLUSION and SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS  Managing behaviour / discipline (heads/service managers)  • Where possible we've put LSAs into subject areas and developed their expertise  • The LSAs have indicated that they feel more comfortable with this arrangement; they know the format and get used to the teachers.	PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT  Helping pupils in general mediators of learning / curriculum (pupils)  Supporting learning / developing children's confidence and ability to learn encouraging children by giving appropriate attention and interest to their activities (pupils)  Someone to turn to / helper (pupils)  Someone to turn to / helper (pupils)  Improving / maintaining pupil motivation (TAs/ pupils)  Listening to children (TAs)  INCLUSION and SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS  Managing behaviour / discipline (heads/service managers)  • Where possible we've put LSAs into subject areas and developed their expertise  • The LSAs have indicated that they feel more comfortable with this arrangement; they know the format and get used to the teachers.

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
				NEW PERCEPTIONS Empathising with pupils from unsupportive backgrounds (TAs) Lifeline / key to attendance at school (TAs) Securing attendance at school exams (TAs/heads) Mentoring about personal problems (TAs/pupils) Working in once subject area (TAs/heads)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We have worked with the LSAs on behaviour management. We've asked the LSAs to provide a list of good teaching practice. It was shown to the staff, and that went down pretty well. The LSAs have gone up a notch in estimation.</li><li>• In terms of their job satisfaction, we don't get a high turnover. (p11)</li></ul> <p>'The important outcome, for the research and its potential for replication, is that the use of support staff as learning mentors does not easily fall into any of the more traditional categories that might be identified as suitable for turning round a 'failing school' (p 11).</p> <p>There has been a shift in perception concerning the roles of the headteacher, teaching staff and support staff.</p>

Mortimore P, Mortimore J, Thomas H (1994b) Secondary school case studies

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
The study was particularly interested in associate staff and their cost-effectiveness. It sought to identify 'innovatory roles and investigated 'apparent benefits, tensions and difficulties as they were perceived by those teachers and associate staff involved'. (p 19)	There were 16 case study secondary schools (9 primary). 16 headteachers, 6 teachers, 12 middle managers and 35 associate support staff were selected for interview. The headteacher was asked for cost-effectiveness information.	Some TAs were interviewed in groups when 'the interviewer met with small groups of four or five staff' (p 184)  Semi-structured interviews with post-holders, heads, teachers and line managers  150 schools received questionnaires.  Table of financial data for heads to complete  The methods are described in detail on pp 183-185 of the final report.	Interview data presented in free text, with case studies presented in a common format: description of school, and then for each post: description of role, boundaries, perceived benefits, perceived disbenefits, other issues, cost-effectiveness summaries were added.  Simple analyses of financial information given, with total costs calculated for the post, and commentary as to whether this is deemed to provide 'value for money'.	PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT  Assessing children's work / contributing to assessment (TAs/ not clear).  Helping pupils in general / mediators of learning / curriculum (not clear)  Helping small groups with tasks set by the teacher (TAs/ teachers/ not clear)  Helping individuals (including tasks set by the teacher) (TAs/ not clear)  Interpreting (instruction/ language/ worksheets)  Translating language (TAs/ not clear)  Supporting learning / developing children's confidence and ability to learn encouraging children by giving appropriate attention and interest to their activities (teachers/ not clear)  Supporting literacy development/ language development (TAs/ not clear)	In general, the message of the work is that associate staff give good value for money is and they relieve teachers of a lot of unnecessary work. Authors concluded that their study indicates that the innovation posts are perceived to be valuable and that they should be developed with a mind to some of the areas of difficulty identified in the study.  Curriculum support posts reduced adult pupil ratio and gave pupils more opportunities for group work.  Chapter 6 of the 1992 report is particularly useful in identifying the conclusions:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching and NTS roles were sometimes blurred.</li> <li>Shedding administrative tasks allowed teachers to concentrate more on teaching.</li> <li>Benefits included enhanced learning opportunities for pupils (1992, p 180).</li> <li>Curriculum support posts offer the most immediate benefits to teachers (ibid, 181).</li> <li>More training would be helpful.</li> </ul>

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
				Listening to children (TAs/ teachers/not clear) INCLUSION AND SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS Managing behaviour / discipline (heads/service managers/not clear) Cocoon protecting children from learning challenges and integrating with peers (heads and service managers/not clear) STAKEHOLDER LINKING Bridging between teachers and pupil 'interface between parents, the teachers and the child' (teachers/not clear) Linking between teacher/school and parent (not clear) SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS Helping teacher / supporting teachers (e.g. in class or with a routine task to enable teacher to concentrate on teaching) (TAs/teachers/not clear) Maintaining / developing resources (TAs/teachers/not clear) Keeping records (teachers/not clear) NEW PERCEPTIONS Mentoring about personal problems (not clear) Supporting ICT development (TAs)	

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
				Enhancing curriculum opportunities (oiling the wheels in class homework) (teachers/heads)  Improving teacher motivation and their ability to meet the needs of students (teachers)	

O'Brien T, Garner P (2001) Untold stories: learning support assistants and their work

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
The authors sought to provide 'a forum for LSAs to tell their own stories' (p 5) about 'what they currently do and the range of influences on the way they operated' (Garner, 2002, p 14). The authors were intent on securing a series of stories in which the 'voice of the LSA predominated' (ibid, p 14).	17 LSAs in the individual case studies; 60 LSAs attended interviews and their views are reported in Chapter 18. Some LSAs gave feedback through focus group interview / discussions of six to ten participants. The number of secondary school participants is not easy to determine.	Focus group discussions (six to ten participants in three centres)  Semi-structured interviews to construct accounts of LSA work  Written accounts following a loosely structured framework  The procedures are described in Chapter 19.	Stories were transcribed and verified by participants (written accounts). Further guidance is not given.	PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT  Helping pupils in general mediators of learning / curriculum (TAs)  Helping small groups with tasks set by the teacher (TAs)  Helping individuals (including tasks set by the teacher) (TAs)  Supporting learning / developing children's confidence and ability to learn encouraging children by giving appropriate attention and interest to their activities (TAs)  Supporting NLS or literacy development (TAs)  Listening to children (TAs)  INCLUSION AND SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS  Securing inclusion / overseeing integration (TAs)  STAKEHOLDER LINKING  Linking between teacher / school and parent (TAs)  )	The LSA is a 'bona fide, committed and active contributor to the learning of all pupils and to the life of schools as organic and inclusive learning environments' (p 144).  LSA support is now a core element of SEN provision; the range of their duties and responsibilities continues to increase. They see themselves 'as professionals with particular skills and attributes'. (2002, p 16)  LSAs are pivotal to inclusion but still regarded as second-class citizens reflected in pay and conditions (p 143).

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
				Giving feedback to parents (TAs) SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS Contributing to individual education plans (TAs) NEW PERCEPTIONS Co-learning with pupils; acting as a pseudo-pupil (TAs)	

Roaf C (2003) Learning support assistants talk about inclusion

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
'In this chapter Carolina Roaf allows us to consider the role of the Learning Support Assistant from their perspective. Here we can gain an insight into the LSA's developing role within the classroom, the school and beyond.' (p 221)	'In this chapter Carolina Roaf allows us to consider the role of the Learning Support Assistant from their perspective. Here we can gain an insight into the LSA's developing role within the classroom, the school and beyond.' (p 221)	75-minute group interview	We can only see the author's subtitles and assume that these broad concepts constituted the analytical units, which (perhaps) prompted the researcher to look for common occurrences. We do not have any information on the nature of the actual interview questions and their degree of structure to make further sense of the data collection and analysis procedure.	PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT  Helping pupils in general mediators of learning / curriculum (TAs)  Helping individuals (including tasks set by the teacher) (TAs)  Supporting numeracy / maths (TAs)  Supporting learning / developing children's confidence and ability to learn encouraging children by giving appropriate attention and interest to their activities (TAs)  Someone to turn to / helper (TAs)  Improving / maintaining pupil motivation (TAs)  Listening to children (TAs)  INCLUSION AND SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS  Securing inclusion / overseeing integration (TAs)  Mediating social interaction with	'Finally, the conversation moved on to a consideration of the future development of the role. Where were LSAs going professionally?' (p 237)  'The clear differentiation of role between teachers and LSA/TA was regarded as mutually supportive but distinct. This was reflected in the guidelines teaching staff were offered for working with the team of LSAs. These emphasise the distinctive role of the LSA on supporting the pupil, the teacher, the curriculum and the school and stress the need for close cooperation.' (p 238)  'I see you as cross-fertilisers' (Sonia) (p 238).  'There was discussion about the extent to which LSAs could take responsibility for areas of student care and welfare. There was speculation as to how far these key worker and community worker roles could be pushed.' (p 239)  'The SENCO summed up with what can also stand as an appropriate conclusion to this discussion:

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
			youngsters; supporting the curriculum, LSA skills, role in the community; the future.	<p>other pupils / facilitating social interactions with peers (TAs)</p> <p>Offering pastoral care / addressing social needs (TAs)</p> <p>Managing behaviour / discipline (TAs/ teachers )</p> <p>STAKEHOLDER LINKING</p> <p>Giving feedback to parents (TAs)</p> <p>Bridging between teacher and pupil 'interface between parents the teachers and the child' (TAs)</p> <p>Linking between teacher / school and parent (TAs)</p> <p>Linking all stakeholders (TAs)</p> <p>SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS</p> <p>Giving feedback on progress to teachers (TAs)</p> <p>NEW PERCEPTIONS</p> <p>Securing attendance at school exams (TAs)</p> <p>Setting good examples: acting as role model; modelling learning/behaviour x4 (TAs)</p>	one of the messages to get across in what you write is that now LSAs are in an incredibly strong position to start changing things the way they want to go' (Sonia) (p 239).

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
				Co-learning with pupils; acting as a pseudo-pupil x 2 (TAs) Supporting all subjects (across departments) (TAs) Helping maintain supportive climate for all (TAs) Advising teachers x 2 (TAs) Being a less formal link / go-between than the teacher (TAs) Modelling alternative behaviours for students x 2 (TAs) Understanding student apprehension and fears (TAs) Advocate for pupils: mole in the classroom; acting to identify pupil potential x 2 (TAs) Giving opportunity to the child misunderstood by the teacher (TAs)	

Vulliamy G, Webb R (2003) Supporting disaffected pupils: perspectives from the pupils, their parents and their teachers

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
To determine issues arising from an analysis of teachers', parents/carers' and pupils' perspectives around the placing of social work-trained home-school support workers in secondary schools	208 pupils in caseload for support (25 interviewed) and pupil questionnaire (N=486) - does not specify to which pupils.	Sample for interviews: parents, pupils and staff  Fieldwork observations in schools  Questionnaires sent to those involved to assess the outcomes of the project  Documentation scrutiny to assess background issues  Literature used for comparison projects  Government policy documents used as project guidelines	'Analysis of the qualitative data used a process of category generation and saturation derived from Glaser and Strauss (1967)' (p 279)	PUPILS' ACADEMIC and/or SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT  Helping pupils in general mediators of learning / curriculum (pupils)  Someone to turn to / helper (pupils/parents)  Listening to children (pupils/parents)  INCLUSION AND SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS  Securing inclusion / overseeing integration (teachers/pupils/parents)  Mediating social interaction with other pupils / facilitating social interactions with peers (not clear)  Managing behaviour / discipline (teachers/pupils/ parents)  STAKEHOLDER LINKING  Bridging between teacher and pupil 'interface between parents the teachers and the child' (teachers)	The authors found support workers were successful in reducing exclusions.  The conclusion states that 'Our analysis of teacher, pupil and parent perspectives on the processes of the 'meeting Need and Challenging Crime in Partnership with Schools' Project' suggests that there are important benefits to be derived from the role of the support workers in schools... Support workers were uniformly valued for their independence, accessibility and availability, skill in developing trusting relationships and sympathetic, constructive advice on problems.' (p 284)  'Both teachers and parents agreed that support workers were responsible for facilitating joint parent-teacher interaction in the discussion of pupil problems' (p 284).  Teachers and parents believed that 'it was the independence and neutrality of support workers, who were perceived as knowing all about school rules and expectations but not instrumental in upholding them, that was a major factor contributing to their successful work with pupils and families.' p 284)

Broad aims of the study	Total number of participants	Methods used to collect data	Methods used to analyse data	Key perceptions of what TAs do (stakeholders in brackets)	Conclusions
				Linking between teacher/school and parent (teachers/pupils/parents/senior management team)  Important stakeholders in education process/educators (not clear)  SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS  Advising with regard to cultural background (teachers)  Helping teacher / supporting teachers (e.g. in class or with a routine task to enable teacher to concentrate on teaching) (teachers)  NEW PERCEPTIONS  Lifeline / key to attendance at school (pupils)  Mentoring about personal problems (TAs/pupils/parents)  Enhancing curriculum opportunities (oiling the wheels in class homework) x 2 (pupils/parents)  Checking homework understood and done (parents)  Target setting: suggesting way forward (social, behavioural and academic) (pupils)	

## Appendix 4.2: Synthesis tables of studies

### *Academic and socio-academic contributions to pupils*

Direct TA contributions to pupils' academic and/or social engagement	Perceived by					
	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Heads/ service managers	Parents	General perception/ not clearly stated
AS 1: Adapting pedagogy to needs of pupils (including lessons or materials) (7)	2	1	2	1	2	3
AS 2: Assessing children's work / contributing to assessment (5)	2	1	1	0	0	2
AS 4: Helping pupils in general mediators of learning / curriculum (15)	6	4	6	2	2	5
AS 5: Helping specific children with needs (8)	4	0	1	1	1	1
AS 6: Helping small groups with tasks set by the teacher (including practical activities)(8)	5	4	1	1	0	3
AS 7: Helping individuals (including with tasks set by the teacher) (8)	4	3	0	1	1	3
AS 8: Interpreting (instructions/ language/ worksheets) translating language (5)	1	0	1	1	0	3
AS 9: Post-tutoring (to re-enforce what has been taught) (1)	0	0	0	0	0	1
AS 11: Supporting numeracy / maths (2)	1	1	0	0	0	0
AS 12: Supporting learning developing children's confidence and ability to learn encouraging children by showing interest to their activities(12)	5	2	3	1	1	3
AS 13: Supporting literacy development or language development (4)	3	1	0	0	0	2
AS14: Someone to turn to/ helper (6)	1	0	4	1	1	0

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AS15: Providing interaction opportunities in class (3)	1	1	0	0	2	2
AS16: Promoting independence / autonomy (6)	3	1	1	1	1	2
AS17: Improving/ maintaining pupil motivation (secondary) (5)	2	1	1	1	0	0
AS18: Listening to children (all secondary) (5)	3	1	1	0	1	2
AS20: Acting as a distraction (2) both sec	0	1	1	0	0	0
AS 21: Lifeline/key to attendance (2)	1	0	1	0	0	0
AS 22: Securing attendance at school (2)	2	0	0	1	0	0
AS 23: Working in one subject area (5)	3	1	0	1	0	0
AS 24: Supporting ICT development (2)	1	1	0	0	0	0
AS 25: Providing support for writing (1)	0	0	1	0	0	0
AS 26: Setting good examples; acting as role model; modelling learning behaviour (3)	2	1	1	0	0	0
AS 27: Co-learning with pupils; acting as a pseudo-pupil (3)	2	2	0	0	0	1
AS 28: Supporting all subjects (across departments) (2)	2	0	0	0	0	2
AS 29: Helping maintain supportive climate for all (2)	1	0	0	0	0	1
AS 30: Checking homework understood and done (1)	0	0	0	0	1	0
AS 31: Target setting: suggesting ways forward (social/behavioural, academic) (1)	0	0	1	0	0	0
AS 32: Encouraging independent interaction (1)	0	0	0	0	0	1
AS 33: Working directly on targets or aspects of the National Curriculum (1)	0	0	0	0	0	1

***Contributions to inclusion***

Inclusion and social contributions	Perceived by					
	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Heads/ service managers	Parents	Generally reported perception/ not clearly stated
B1: Securing inclusion/ overseeing integration (11)	6	4	2	2	4	3
B2: Mediating social interaction with other pupils / facilitating social interaction with peers (including advice about impairment) (6)	5	0	0	0	1	2
B3: Offering pastoral care / addressing social needs (4)	2	1	1	0	1	2
B4: Managing behaviour / discipline (7)	1	3	2	1	1	3
B5: Modelling alternative behaviours (1)	1	0	0	0	0	0
B6: Cocoon protecting children from learning challenges and integrating with peers (6)	2	1	1	2	0	2
B7: Empathising with pupils from unsupportive backgrounds (2)	1	0	0	0	0	1
B8: Interfering with peer group relationships (1)	0	0	1	0	0	0
B9: Mentoring about personal problems (3)	2	0	2	0	1	1
B10: Giving opportunity to child misunderstood by teacher (1)	1	0	0	0	0	0

## Stakeholder relations

Stakeholder linking	Perceived by					
	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Heads/ service managers	Parents	Generally reported perception/ not clearly stated
SR1: Giving feedback to parents (5)	20	0	0	0	2	1
SR2: Bridging between T and pupil (6)	3	2	0	0	0	2
SR3: Linking between teacher/school and parent (including home visiting) 'interface between parents the teachers and the child (9)	5	1	1	0	3	2
SR4: Linking all stakeholders (3)	2	0	0	0	0	2
SR5: Important stakeholders in education process / educators (7)	3	2	0	0	0	5
SR6: Supporting school leavers on placements	0	0	0	1	0	0
SR7: Shaping attitudes of FE staff about these pupils	0	0	0	1	0	0
SR8: Being a less formal link than the teacher	1	0	0	0	0	0
SR9: Advocate for pupils: mole in the classroom; acting to identify pupils	1	0	0	0	0	0

***Support to teachers that contributes to pupil, social and engagement outcomes***

Support for teachers	Perceived by					
	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Heads/service managers	Parents	Generally reported perception/ not clearly stated
TC1: Advising with regard to social/cultural background (including translation) (2)	0	1	0	0	0	1
TC2: Supervising class (when required to allow T to concentrate on small group) whole class teaching (2)	0	1	0	0	1	0
TC3: Helping teacher / supporting teachers (e.g. in class or with routine task to enable teacher to concentrate on teaching) (7)	3	4	1	0	0	3
TC4: Giving feedback on progress to teachers (6)	4	1	0	1	1	1
TC5: Maintaining/ developing resources (5)	2	2	0	1	0	2
TC6: Contributing to individual education plans (4)	3	1	0	0	0	1
TC7: Planning programmes of work (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0
TC8: Keeping records (2)	0	1	0	0	0	2
TC9: Advising teachers	1	0	0	0	0	0
TC10: Creating an efficient and pleasant atmosphere	1	0	0	0	0	0
TC11: Improving teacher motivation by supporting their ability to meet the needs of students (1)	0	1	0	0	0	0

## APPENDIX 4.3 Synthesis tables of all studies

### *Academic and socio-academic contributions to pupils*

\* Asterisked are secondary school only; non-asterisked items are reported in cross-phase studies.

Direct TA contributions to pupils' academic and/or social engagement	Perceived by:						Generally reported perception / not clearly stated
	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Heads/service managers	Parents		
AS1 Adapting pedagogy to needs of pupils (including Lessons or materials)	Farrell et al. MENCAP	Ebersold	MENCAP Jarvis*	Moran and Abbott	Ebersold MENCAP	Ebersold Hemmingsson et al. MENCAP	
AS2 Assessing children's work/ contributing to assessment	Mortimore et al.* Jerwood*	Neill	Chambers and Pearson*			Hemmingsson et al Mortimore et al.*	
AS4 Helping pupils in general mediators of learning/ curriculum Enhancing curriculum opportunities (oiling the wheels in class)	O'Brien and Garner Ebersold MENCAP Jerwood* Golze* Roaf*	MENCAP Ebersold Mortimore et al* Neill	Bowers MENCAP Jarvis* Chambers and Pearson* Vulliamy and Webb* Kerry*	Moran and Abbott Mortimore et al	MENCAP Vulliamy and Webb	Hemmingsson et al MENCAP Mortimore et al* Jerwood* Kerry*	
AS5 Helping specific children with needs	Farrell et al. Shaw Ebersold Roaf*		Bowers	Moran and Abbott	MENCAP	Hemmingsson et al.	
AS6 Helping small groups with tasks set by the teacher (including practical activities)	Farrell et al. O'Brien and Garner <sup>3</sup> Shaw MENCAP Mortimore et al.*	Moran and Abbott Neill, MENCAP Mortimore et al.*	Chambers and Pearson*	Moran and Abbott		Farrell et al. MENCAP Mortimore et al.*	

Direct TA contributions to pupils' academic and/or social engagement	Perceived by:						
	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Heads/service managers	Parents	Generally reported perception / not clearly stated	
AS7 Helping individuals (including tasks set by the teacher)	Farrell et al. O'Brien and Garner MENCAP Mortimore et al.*	Farrell et al. O'Brien and Garner MENCAP Mortimore et al.*		Moran and Abbott	Moran and Abbott	Hemmingsson et al. Farrell et al. Mortimore et al.*	
AS8 Interpreting (instructions/language/worksheets) translating language	Mortimore et al.*		Jarvis*	Moran and Abbott		Hemmingsson et al. MENCAP Mortimore et al.*	
AS9 Post-tutoring (to re-enforce what has been taught)						Hemmingsson et al.	
AS11 Supporting numeracy / maths	Roaf*	Neill (primary)					
AS12 Supporting learning developing children's confidence and ability to learn encouraging children by giving appropriate attention and interest to their activities	Shaw O'Brien and Garner Ebersold Golze* Roaf*	Ebersold Mortimore et al.*	Jarvis* Chambers and Pearson* Kerry*	Moran and Abbott	Farrell et al.*	Hemmingsson et al. Farrell et al. Shaw Mortimore et al.*	
AS13 Supporting NLS or literacy development / Supporters of language development	O'Brien and Garner* Farrell et al. Mortimore et al.*	Neill (primary)				Farrell et al. (primary) Mortimore et al.*	
AS14 Someone to turn to/helper	Roaf*		Farrell et al. MENCAP Kerry* Vulliamy and Webb*	Moran and Abbott	Farrell et al. MENCAP Kerry* Vulliamy and Webb*		
AS15 Providing interaction opportunities in class	Ebersold	Ebersold			Ebersold MENCAP	Hemmingsson et al. MENCAP	

Direct TA contributions to pupils' academic and/or social engagement	Perceived by:						
	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Heads/service managers	Parents	Generally reported perception / not clearly stated	
AS16 Promoting independence / autonomy	Ebersold MENCAP Chambers and Pearson*	Ebersold	Farrell et al. Inference	Moran and Abbott	MENCAP	Hemmingsson et al. Farrell et al.	
AS17 Improving / maintaining pupil motivation	Golze* Roaf	Ebersold	Kerry*	Moran and Abbott			
AS18 Listening to children	O'Brien and Garner Mortimore et al. Roaf*	Mortimore et al.*	Vulliamy and Webb*		Vulliamy and Webb*	Farrell et al. Mortimore et al.*	
AS20 Acting as a distraction		Golze*	Chambers and Pearson*				
AS21 Lifeline / key to attendance at school	Kerry*		Vulliamy and Webb*				
AS22 Securing attendance at school exams	Roaf*; Kerry*			Kerry*			
AS23 Working in one subject area	Chambers and Pearson* Kerry* Jerwood*	Neill* (secondary)		Kerry*			
AS24 Supporting ICT development	Mortimore et al. *	Neill (primary)					
AS25 Providing support for writing activities			Jarvis*				
AS26 Setting good examples: acting as role model; modelling learning / behaviour	Golze* Roaf* (x 4)	Chambers and Pearson*	Chambers and Pearson* (x 2)				

Direct TA contributions to pupils' academic and/or social engagement	Perceived by:					
	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Heads/service managers	Parents	Generally reported perception / not clearly stated
AS27 Co-learning with pupils; acting as a pseudo-pupil	Chambers and Pearson Roaf (x 2)	Chambers and Pearson* O'Brien and Garner				Chambers and Pearson*
AS28 Supporting all subjects (cross depts)	Chambers and Pearson* MENCAP					Chambers and Pearson* MENCAP
AS29 Helping maintain supportive climate for all	Roaf*					Chambers and Pearson*
AS30 Checking homework understood and done					Vulliamy and Webb*	
AS31 Target setting: suggesting way forward (social, behavioural and academic)			Vulliamy and Webb*			
AS32 Encouraging independent interaction (e.g. watching from a distance)						MENCAP
AS33 Working directly on the targets or aspects of the National Curriculum						MENCAP

## Contributions to inclusion

Inclusion and social contributions	Perceived by:						Generally reported perception / not clearly stated
	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Heads/ service managers	Parents		
Securing inclusion/ overseeing integration	O'Brien and Garner Shaw, Farrell et al. Ebersold MENCAP Roaf*	O'Brien and Garner Shaw, Farrell et al. Ebersold MENCAP Roaf*	Jarvis* Vulliamy and Webb*	Moran and Abbott Farrell et al.	Ebersold Farrell et al. MENCAP Vulliamy and Webb*	Shaw Hemmingsson et al.: positive and negative MENCAP	
Mediating social interaction with other pupils / facilitating social interaction, with peers (including advice about impairment)	Hemmingsson et al., Ebersold MENCAP Chambers and Pearson* Roaf*				Ebersold	Hemmingsson et al. Vulliamy and Webb*	
Offering pastoral care / addressing social needs	MENCAP Roaf*	Neill	MENCAP		MENCAP	Hemmingsson et al. MENCAP	
Managing behaviour / discipline	Roaf*	Neill Farrell et al. Vulliamy and Webb*	Bowers Vulliamy and Webb*	Mortimore et al.*	Vulliamy and Webb*	Farrell et al. MENCAP Mortimore et al.*	
Modelling alternative behaviours for students	Roaf* (x 2)						

Inclusion and social contributions	Perceived by:						Generally reported perception / not clearly stated
	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Heads/ service managers	Parents		
Cocoon: protecting children from learning challenges and integrating with peers	Shaw Chambers and Pearson*	Moran and Abbott Mortimore et al.*	Bowers (by inference)	Moran and Abbott Mortimore et al.*			Hemmingsson et al. Mortimore et al.*
B7 Empathising with pupils from unsupportive backgrounds	Kerry*						Vulliamy and Webb*
Interfering with peer group relationships			Jarvis*				
Mentoring about personal problems	Vulliamy and Webb* Kerry*		Vulliamy and Webb* Kerry*		Vulliamy and Webb*		Mortimore et al.*
Giving opportunity to child misunderstood by the teacher	Roaf*						

## Stakeholder relations

Stakeholder linking	Perceived by:					
	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Heads/ service managers	Parents	Generally reported perception / not clearly stated
Giving feedback to parents	O'Brien and Garner Roaf*				Ebersold Farrell et al.	MENCAP
Bridging between T and pupil: 'interface between parents, the teachers and the child' (Ebersold)	Ebersold; O'Brien and Garner Roaf*	Mortimore et al.* Vulliamy and Webb*				Hemmingsson et al. Mortimore et al.*
Linking between teacher / school and parent (including home visiting)	Ebersold Shaw O'Brien and Garner Golze* Roaf*	Vulliamy and Webb*	Vulliamy and Webb*		Farrell et al. MENCAP Vulliamy and Webb*	Shaw Mortimore et al.*
Linking all stakeholders	Ebersold Roaf*					Ebersold MENCAP
Important stakeholders in education process/educators	Ebersold Shaw Jerwood*	Ebersold Neill				Shaw Farrell et al. Ebersold Golze* Vulliamy and Webb*
Supporting school leavers on placements				Moran and Abbott		

Stakeholder linking	Perceived by:						
	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Heads/ service managers	Parents	Generally reported perception / not clearly stated	
Shaping attitudes of FE staff about these pupils				Moran and Abbott			
Being a less formal link / go-between than the teacher	Roaf*						
Advocate for pupils: mole in the classroom; acting to identify pupil potential	Roaf* (x 2)						

### *Contributions to teachers that contribute to social and engagement*

Stakeholder linking	Perceived by:						
	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Heads/ service managers	Parents	Generally reported perception / not clearly stated	
TC1 Advising with regard to social and cultural background (including translation)		Vulliamy and Webb*				Vulliamy and Webb*	
TC2 Supervising class (when required to allow T to concentrate on small group) whole class teaching		Neill			Farrell et al.		
TC3 Helping teacher / supporting teachers (e.g. in class or with routine task to enable teacher to concentrate on teaching)	Farrell et al. Ebersold Mortimore et al.*	Neill Ebersold Mortimore et al.* Vulliamy and Webb*	Bowers			Hemmingsson Farrell et al. Mortimore et al.*	
TC4 Giving feedback on progress to teachers	Farrell et al. Chambers and Pearson* Jerwood* Roaf*	Chambers and Pearson*		Moran and Abbott	Ebersold	Farrell et al.	
TC5 Maintaining / developing resources	Mortimore et al.* Golze*	Neill Mortimore et al.*		Moran and Abbott		MENCAP Mortimore et al.*	
TC6 Contributing to individual education plans	O'Brien and Garner Farrell et al. Jerwood*	Farrell et al.				MENCAP	

Stakeholder linking	Perceived by:						
	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Heads/ service managers	Parents	Generally reported perception / not clearly stated	
TC1 Advising with regard to social and cultural background (including translation)		Vulliamy and Webb*				Vulliamy and Webb*	
TC2 Supervising class (when required to allow T to concentrate on small group) whole class teaching		Neill			Farrell et al.		
TC3 Helping teacher / supporting teachers (e.g. in class or with routine task to enable teacher to concentrate on teaching)	Farrell et al. Ebersold Mortimore et al.*	Neill Ebersold Mortimore et al.* Vulliamy and Webb*	Bowers			Hemmingsson Farrell et al. Mortimore et al.*	
TC4 Giving feedback on progress to teachers	Farrell et al. Chambers and Pearson* Jerwood* Roaf*	Chambers and Pearson*		Moran and Abbott	Ebersold	Farrell et al.	
TC5 Maintaining / developing resources	Mortimore et al.* Golze*	Neill Mortimore et al.*		Moran and Abbott		MENCAP Mortimore et al.*	
TC6 Contributing to individual education plans	O'Brien and Garner Farrell et al. Jerwood*	Farrell et al.				MENCAP	

Stakeholder linking	Perceived by:						
	TAs	Teachers	Pupils	Heads/ service managers	Parents	Generally reported perception / not clearly stated	
TC7 Planning programmes of work							
TC8 Keeping records		Mortimore et al.*				MENCAP Mortimore et al.*	
TC9 Advising teachers	Roaf* (x 2)						
TC10 Creating an efficient and pleasant atmosphere	Golze*						
TC11 Improving teacher motivation and their ability to meet the needs of students		Mortimore et al.*					

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## Appendix 4.4: Studies known to focus on secondary mainstream only

***See References for full details.***

Bang M-Y, Lamb P (1996) The impact of inclusion of students with challenging needs

Busher H, Blease D (2000) Growing collegial cultures in subject departments in secondary schools: working with science staff

Case EJ, Johnson BJ (1986) P.L. 94-142 C-Level Aide Program, 1985-1986 evaluation report

Chambers GN, Pearson S (2004) Supported access to modern foreign language lessons

Cleveland AA (1970) Teachers' aides: a project report

Ellis SW (2003) Changing the lives of children and older people: intergenerational mentoring in secondary schools

Getz HG (1972) Paraprofessionals in the English Department

Giersch BS (1973) Teaching aides: how well do they perform in the secondary schools?

Golze S (2002) Perceptions of support staff: how they see themselves and how others see them

Hooker J (1985) Parent volunteers improve reading in a secondary school

Jarvis J (2003) 'It's more peaceful without any support': What do deaf pupils think about the support they receive in mainstream schools?

Jerwood L (1999) Using special needs assistants effectively

Kerry CA (2002) Support staff as mentors: a case study of innovation

Maslin B et al. (1978) Para-professionals: role identity and conflict

Mortimore P, Mortimore J, Thomas H (1994b) Secondary school case studies

Roaf C (2003) Learning support assistants talk about inclusion

Stewart BF (1971) The role of secondary school para-professionals

Vulliamy G, Webb R (2003) Supporting disaffected pupils: perspectives from the pupils, their parents and their teachers

West LW (1970) An evaluation of the use of teachers' aides in Eckville School

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## Appendix 4.5: Non-European studies excluded from the in-depth review

*Secondary focused, at least in part.*

*See References for full details.*

Bang M-Y, Lamb P (1996) The impact of inclusion of students with challenging needs

Broer SM, Doyle BM, Giangreco MF (2005) Perspectives of students with intellectual disabilities about their experiences with paraprofessional support

Chopra RV, Sandoval-Lucero E, Aragon L, Bernal C, De Balderas HB, Carroll D (2004) The paraprofessional role of connector

Downing JE, Ryndak, DL, Clark D (2000) Paraeducators in inclusive classrooms: their own perceptions

Frank AR, Keith TZ, Steil DA (1988) Training needs of special education paraprofessionals

French NK (1998) Working together: resource teachers and paraeducators

French NK, Chopra RV (1999) Parent perspectives on the roles of paraprofessionals

French NK (2001) Supervising paraprofessionals: a survey of teacher practices

Giangreco MF, Broer SM (2005) Questionable utilization of paraprofessionals in inclusive schools: are we addressing symptoms or causes?

Giangreco MF, Edelman SW, Luiselli TE, MacFarland SZC (1997) Helping or hovering? Effects of instructional assistant proximity on students with disabilities

Giangreco MF, Edelman SW, Broer SM (2001b) Respect, appreciation, and acknowledgment of paraprofessionals who support students with disabilities

Giangreco MF, Broer SM, Edelman SW (2002) That was then, this is now! Paraprofessional supports for students with disabilities in general education classrooms

Goessling DP (1998) The invisible elves of the inclusive school - paraprofessionals

Marks SU, Schrader C, Levine M (1999). Paraeducator experiences in inclusive settings: helping, hovering, or holding their own?

Minondo S, Meyer LH, Xin JF (2001). The role and responsibilities of teaching assistants in inclusive education: what's appropriate?

Sabin LA, Donnellan AM (1993) A qualitative study of the process of facilitated communication

Stahl BJ, Lorenz G (1994) Views on paraprofessionals

The results of this systematic review are available in four formats:

**SUMMARY**

Explains the purpose of the review and the main messages from the research evidence

**REPORT**

Describes the background and the findings of the review(s) but without full technical details of the methods used

**TECHNICAL  
REPORT**

Includes the background, main findings, and full technical details of the review

**DATABASES**

Access to codings describing each research study included in the review

These can be downloaded or accessed at <http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/reel/>

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