

# **Advanced Skills Teacher Policy**

***November 2007***



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## **Cambridgeshire Local Authority**

### **Context and purpose**

The role of Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) was devised to reward excellent teachers who wished to remain in the classroom and spend the equivalent of one day per week in supporting other teachers in developing their skills and experience through the sharing of best practice, ideas and approaches.

Within Cambridgeshire there is a mixture of Local Authority (LA) and school funded AST posts, all working towards improving teaching and learning in all types and phases of maintained schools. The creation of an AST post can provide a focus for, and leadership in, the development of teaching and learning across the school as well as contributing to the development of individual colleagues.

The purpose of this statement is to outline the roles and responsibilities of the Local Authority, schools and ASTs and to describe the procedures to be followed if an AST post becomes vacant.

### **The role of the AST**

The key characteristics of an AST are as follows:

- ASTs are excellent teachers with excellent classroom practice, given additional payment and non-contact time to share their skills and experience with other teachers and learn from them.
- ASTs specialise in teaching and learning and their skills in this area are used within their own school and with teachers from other schools through agreed outreach work.
- ASTs may also contribute to activities such as central LA training or work with ITT/HE institutions or curriculum development initiatives. Other areas of expertise can be used as appropriate.
- ASTs complement the work of other members of the Learning Community, such as LA Advisers, National Strategy Consultants and Leading Teachers.

20% of time should be spent on outreach activities unless the school has an Ofsted category, in which case 10% of time can be spent on 'inreach'. In Cambridgeshire there are three ways in which outreach for LA funded ASTs is arranged:

- requests from the Heads of Standards and Effectiveness and Secondary National Strategy Strand Managers to support school improvement priorities, e.g. schools with an Ofsted category
- requests from LA Advisers to support components of the professional development programme, e.g. co-tutoring a short course

- ASTs, through their schools, making links with feeder primary schools and/or partner secondary schools

Each term, the AST must submit a report about outreach activities for the previous term to the LA and their headteacher, if LA funded, or to the headteacher, if school funded.

Similarly, copies of evaluation sheets for all outreach work must be kept by the AST and originals sent to the LA and/or the headteacher.

Report forms, Agreement forms and Evaluation forms can be obtained from the Cambridgeshire Advisory Service.

### **The role of the Local Authority AST Co-ordinator**

The Local Authority receives an allocation of funding, equivalent to 10% of an Officer's time, to co-ordinate aspects of AST provision. Specifically, the AST co-ordinator will:

- maintain a register of LA and school funded ASTs
- organise a termly network meeting for ASTs
- maintain a termly record of AST outreach work
- advise headteachers on AST appointments, funding and deployment
- offer support to AST applicants, LA and school funded
- offer support for the induction of new ASTs, LA and school funded
- organise professional development opportunities for ASTs as required
- maintain the AST site on the Education Portal

AST network meetings are run once per term for the purpose of professional development, networking and sharing good practice.

ASTs will receive updates on issues of interest to them, including regional and national information as it becomes available. These are accessible on the Education Portal [www.ccceducation.net](http://www.ccceducation.net) search AST.

### **The role of the school**

The school has a number of key responsibilities:

- Line management - the line management of any AST is internal to the school
- Performance Management - once an AST takes up the post, schools are responsible for their year-on-year assessment as part of the school's performance management system. The AST will use the evaluations of their outreach and termly logs as evidence of meeting their targets and subsequently rising up the leadership pay spine. Progression is funded from within the grant received by LA schools
- Supporting outreach – for outreach to be successful attention has to be given to the ASTs' timetable; generally, a whole day, or two half days, is the most effective allocation of time. Schools should help ASTs arrange outreach, contacting the LA AST Co-ordinator for support if necessary.

- Making the most of the AST in the school – ASTs can add value to the work of the school beyond their outreach commitments, e.g. coaching, leading INSET and schools are encouraged to make the most of ASTs' skills and abilities.
- Schools must inform the AST Co-ordinator as soon as they know that an AST is leaving their post in order that a decision about its future allocation can be taken (see below).

### **Funding For ASTs**

The Standards Fund School Development Grant supports an allocation of ASTs, which reflects the number of ASTs in post in each Local Authority in April 2004. Currently there are 37 LA funded AST posts in Cambridgeshire: 33 in secondary, 2 in primary and 2 in special school. The grant pays for cover for the cost of outreach, additional costs to the school for placing the AST on the AST pay scale and the cost of any management allowance previously paid to the AST that is transferred to another teacher.

Increasingly, schools are funding their own posts and in Cambridgeshire there are 8 school funded ASTs. It must be remembered that, even where the school is funding the post, outreach work is still an integral part of the ASTs' role, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

We encourage school funded ASTs to submit their reports and pen portraits to the coordinator so that they can be included in the details sent to schools. The LA will provide guidance and support to any potential AST, even if school funded.

### **Allocation of New Posts**

AST funding supports a post, not a person. If an AST leaves a LA funded post it is necessary to re-evaluate the post to ensure it continues to meet the LA's priorities. If the post does not meet one or more of these priorities, the LA is free to redirect the funding.

Current priorities are:

- Teachers working in the Foundation and Primary Stage because this phase is under-represented
- Schools with an Ofsted category because of the role ASTs play in raising standards of teaching and learning
- Subjects that are under-represented in order that as wide an area of the curriculum can be supported by ASTs
- Areas of the county where ASTs are under-represented

Schools must inform the AST Co-ordinator as soon as they know that an AST is leaving their post in order that a decision about its future can be taken. The Head of Professional Development Service, in discussion with the school, will take this decision. If agreement cannot be reached, the school can appeal to the Director of Learning or continue funding the post themselves.

## **Applying to be an AST / AST Induction**

Full details on how to apply to be an AST can be found at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/professionaldevelopment/ast/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/professionaldevelopment/ast/)

The AST Coordinator will support a potential AST by visiting to discuss the process and any concerns, if required. The AST Coordinator can also be contacted if help is needed with gathering evidence for the portfolio or information is needed about the process of assessment.

Following a successful outcome to the assessment of a new AST the LA coordinator will make contact to offer support for the new AST.

New ASTs can be paired with a mentor, to ensure that a new AST is fully involved and understands the role and responsibilities, draws on expertise of other ASTs, develops AST interpersonal skills and develops skills of self-evaluation.

The AST coordinator can be contacted for support at any time.

### **National Information**

For more detailed information about ASTs see

[www.teachernet.gov.uk](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk)

[www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)

[www.dfes.org.uk](http://www.dfes.org.uk)

### **Local Authority Contacts**

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