MAKING BEST USE OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS
TA observation schedule

This lesson observation schedule allows senior leaders to collect data that will aid their understanding of how TAs are deployed in classrooms across their school. It is based on a tried and tested research tool used in several projects involving observations of TAs.

Using the schedule is straightforward, however, it is important that senior leaders hold in mind that TAs' practice and performance are a reflection of decisions made by teachers and the school leadership about TAs, not by TAs themselves. It is inappropriate to judge TAs' performance without considering the factors that determine their use and effectiveness in classrooms.

Time: The schedule is designed to record TAs' activities on a two minute basis. Ensure consistency across all observations, so your analyses are fair.

Lesson part: Record this using the key at the foot of the schedule. You will be able to analyse your data on TAs' activities according to the phase of the lesson. You may find common patterns of deployment across the school.

Predominant activity of TA: Summarise the main role a TA has undertaken for half of your chosen time interval. So, if you are collecting data every two minutes, note down the predominant activity the TA did for half of that time. Tick only one of the five columns. Total up the ticks per column in the bottom row, and convert into a percentage. Aggregating these frequencies across number of observations will help you understand how TAs spend their time in classrooms.

TA-supported pupil(s); Task differentiation; Teacher's role: Use these columns to add concurrent qualitative notes on the pupil(s) with whom the TA works, and any evidence that the tasks the TA supports have been differentiated, or are different, from the tasks undertaken by the rest of the class. General simultaneous notes on what the teacher is doing during the lesson can reveal similarities and differences between the two roles.

Features of TA-to-pupil talk: Use this column to record the frequency of key features of TA-pupil interaction. You can refer to the strategies in Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants (below):
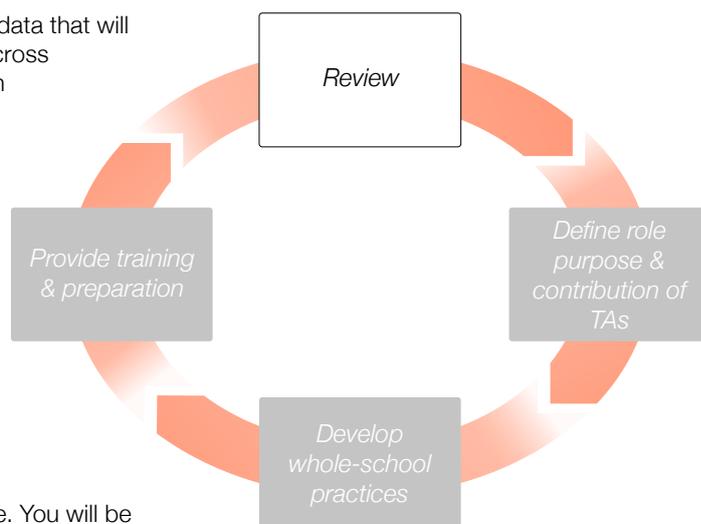
Avoid	Encourage
x Prioritising task completion	✓ Providing the right amount of support at the right time
x Not allowing pupils enough thinking and response time	✓ Pupils to be comfortable taking risks with their learning
x 'Stereo-teaching' (repeating verbatim what the teacher says)	✓ Use of open ended questions
x High use of closed questions	✓ Pupils retaining responsibility for their learning
x Over-prompting and spoon-feeding	✓ Giving the least amount of help first to support pupils' ownership of the task

Observation schedule and guidance adapted from (Webster, R., Russell, A. and Blatchford, P. (2016) *Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants*, 2nd Ed.)

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Date:	Teacher:	Lesson details (topic/objectives):
Class/Year	TA:	

| Time (minutes) | Lesson part * | Predominant activity of TA | | | | | Pupil(s) being supported (name, attainment level, SEND, EAL, etc.) | Task differentiation (e.g. different content?) | Teacher's role | Features of TA-to-pupil talk |
		With pupil one-to-one	With group of pupils	Roving classroom	Listening to teacher teach	Other task (tidying/admin)				
2										
4										
6										
8										
10										
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48										
50										
52										
54										
56										
58										
60										
Total										
Summary		%	%	%	%	%				

* Key for 'Lesson part': I = Teacher's main input T = Main learning task P = Plenary