

Provision of Teachers and Pupil Support Assistants to support children and young people with additional supports needs within secondary schools – paper submitted by the ASN Advisory Committee, Scottish Secondary Teachers’ Association (SSTA)

For a number of years the SSTA has raised concerns about ASN staffing levels and the provision of training for teachers and pupil support assistants who are employed to support children and young people within Scotland’s secondary schools. In 2010 and again in 2016 the SSTA forwarded Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to all of Scotland’s 32 local authorities in order to obtain information about ASN staffing levels and other matters relating to ASN. A table collating the information provided by local authorities for these years can be found in Appendix 1.

In addition to this information the ASN Advisory Committee of the SSTA has considered information published within the government’s 2010 and 2016 (Appendix 2) Census returns. In this context we should like to highlight the following:

1. From 2010 to 2016 the number of pupils in secondary schools decreased by 6.6%, while the number of pupils in the primary sector increased by 8.5%. The pupil/teacher ratio between 2010 and 2016 within the secondary sector remained relatively constant at 12.1 and 12.2 respectively. Between 2010 and 2016 in the primary sector the pupil/teacher ratio has increased from 15.8 to 16.6. (Ref.: Appendix 2, Table 1.1).
2. The number of teachers recorded as working within Learning Support & ASN (according to the main subject taught) within the secondary sector in 2010 and 2016 decreased by **24%**. The number of teachers recorded as working within Learning Support & ASN (recorded by main subject taught) within the primary sector in 2010 and 2016 decreased by **31%**. Please refer to the table immediately below. Over the same period, the number of centrally based (in both secondary and primary) ASN teachers increased by 192 in number. (Ref.: Appendix 2, Table 5.2).

	SECONDARY	PRIMARY	
	Learning Support & ASN Teachers	Learning Support & ASN Teachers	Centrally Based ASN Teachers (Secondary and Primary)
2010	1604	845	375
2016	1215	588	567

(Ref.: Appendix 2, Tables 2.8 & 3.9).

3. The number of support staff working in class rooms in secondary schools is noted on the following page. Between 2010 and 2016 the number of ASN auxiliary or care assistants and behaviour support staff decreased by 18%. However, the number of classroom assistants increased over the same period. To what extent classroom assistants may or may not support pupils with additional support needs is unclear. This is because in some secondary schools in addition to supporting pupils, classroom assistants also support teachers in the preparation of resources e.g. for cookery & other practical type lessons, and in the photocopying of materials as well as in other activities.

	ASN auxiliary or care assistants	Behaviour Support	Classroom Assistants
2010	1805	135	833
2016	1485	112	1163

(Ref.: Appendix 2, Table 3.17).

4. The government has published the following table entitled, “High Level Summary of Statistics Trend Last update: December 2016 Additional Support Needs”. In 2011, 98,523 pupils were noted to have Additional Support Needs. In 2016, 170,329 pupils - a 72% increase - were noted to have Additional Support Needs. The numbers of pupils receiving “Other” type of support” has increased by 124%. Please refer to the table immediately below.

Pupils with Additional Support Needs

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total pupils with Additional Support Needs	98,523	118,034	131,621	140,542	153,190	170,329
With a Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP)	3,617	3,448	3,279	3,128	2,716	2,385
With Individualised Education Programmes (IEP)	42,819	42,847	40,089	37,640	37,168	37,733
Assessed or Declared Disabled	14,682	15,368	15,510	15,156	15,899	16,265
With Child Plans	3,351	7,235	12,102	15,946	20,235	25,095
With any 'Other' type of support	58,256	77,892	94,090	103,568	115,527	131,042

Source: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/TrendSpecialEducation>

Please note that 2010 figures are not available because prior to 2011 information on additional support needs was collected in a different way. Child Plans were introduced around 2011 and these will eventually replace Individualised Education Programmes and Co-ordinated Support Plans. For this reason the number of Individualised Education Programmes and Co-ordinated Support Plans decreased from 2011 to 2016, while the number of Child Plans increased during the same period.

5. Appendix 3, entitled “Census Statistics, Secondary 2016”, collates Census information about ASN staffing, Total Number of Pupils, and Percentage of Free School Meals within the secondary sector for each local authority. The local authorities are not arranged alphabetically: they are arranged according to the total number of pupils in each authority’s secondary schools (from highest to lowest). This information has been collated in an attempt to consider and compare ASN staffing levels across local authorities.

While it is recognised that local authorities differ in the ways in which they make provision for children and young people with additional support needs, at the same time it is difficult to consider the appropriateness or otherwise of ASN staffing levels across local authorities.

This is especially so when considering the total number of pupils in each local authority together with the percentage of Free School Meals (a measure of deprivation).

An example of this can be found in a comparison of two local authorities - Aberdeenshire and Glasgow City. It is recorded that Aberdeenshire has a total pupil roll in the secondary sector of 14016; Glasgow City has 24377. Free School Meal Entitlement in Glasgow authority is 24% whereas in Aberdeenshire it is 5.85%. Glasgow City is recorded as having 49 ASN teachers, whereas Aberdeenshire is recorded as having 119 ASN teachers. It is also recorded that Glasgow City has no ASN PSAs whereas Aberdeenshire has 129.

The local authorities of Moray and Midlothian have approximately the same number of secondary pupils, yet their respective provision of teacher staffing within ASN would appear to be markedly different, amounting to 32 (Moray) and 16 (Midlothian). This is particularly of note in the context of their respective percentage of free school meal entitlement of 8.2% (Moray) and 13.6% (Midlothian). It is recorded that Moray has 66 ASN PSAs whereas Midlothian has 7.

6. The "Requirements for Teachers (Scotland) Regulations 2005" require that where an education authority employs a teacher wholly or mainly to teach pupils who are hearing impaired, visually impaired or both hearing impaired and visually impaired, then that teacher must possess an appropriate qualification to teach such pupils. There are approximately 6624 visually or hearing impaired learners within local authority schools in Scotland. Yet according to Tables 5.2 and 8.9 contained within "*Census Supplementary data 2016*" (Appendix 2) there are only 36 teachers of the visually impaired and 57 teachers of the hearing impaired working across all 32 local authorities. This amounts to a pupil/teacher ratio of 71:1. Census information available suggests that a number of local authorities employ no teachers of the visually or hearing impaired.

Our Comments and Concerns

ASN Provision

The pupil/teacher ratio between 2010 and 2016 within the secondary sector remained relatively constant at 12.1 and 12.2 respectively. Between 2010 and 2016 in the primary sector the pupil/teacher ratio increased from 15.8 to 16.6. At the same time the total number of pupils recognised as having additional support needs (across all sectors) increased by 72%, whereas the number of teachers working within Learning Support & ASN in both the primary and secondary sectors decreased by around 26%.

During this same period there has been an increase in centrally based ASN specialist teachers (192 more appointed across Scotland) which would suggest that some authorities have appointed these teachers mainly, if not exclusively, in the role of visiting consultants. Therefore it is unclear to what extent these teachers provide direct support in class to pupils with additional support needs.

The reduction in ASN staffing levels and the wide variation in ASN staffing levels across local authorities may be viewed with some concern. Indeed, Appendix 3 indicates that a 'postcode lottery' of ASN provision may be starting to develop across Scotland.

As stated earlier, we understand that a number of variables should be considered in the context of ASN provision across local authorities. At the same time, however, since these variables and models are somewhat opaque it is therefore difficult to appreciate whether or not resources to support our most vulnerable young people are being distributed fairly and equitably. What does seem clear is that it is unlikely that certain groups of children and young people with additional support needs are being taught routinely within smaller classes as one method of meeting their ASN needs. This because the pupil/teacher ratio has not decreased in either the secondary or primary sector. Nor is this arrangement likely to be common (or even actually occur) within English and Maths classes within the secondary sector since the number of English and Maths teachers has actually decreased by 12% over the period 2010 to 2016.

Detailed Census data relating to the field of ASN has been available since 2010. In order to ensure that a clearer national picture of ASN provision is made available it would be useful if the nomenclature used to describe the variety of staffing roles within additional support needs was used consistently across all authorities. This increased clarity and consistency of nomenclature would also reduce the likelihood of misreporting which can be identified when one compares the data obtained by the SSTA with the data contained within Census statistics. For example, information provided to the SSTA indicates that on Census Day 2016, 92 ASN teachers were working within the secondary sector of Dumfries and Galloway. By contrast, the actual Census figures returned by the same Local Authority record that 38 ASN teachers were employed on the same day. That is, a discrepancy of 54 teachers.

Training

It is our understanding that across Scotland training opportunities for ASN staff have been reduced. It is especially of concern that teachers can now be appointed to promoted positions within ASN without actually having taught in this area or even having any specialised qualifications in this field.

Impact

In our view the main consequences and effects of the reduction in the numbers of ASN teachers and ASN PSAs are three fold.

First, the needs of pupils are not fully met. Their needs do not disappear; they are simply deferred, potentially costing more to put right at some later date. In the meantime these young people do not reach their full potential; they may become disaffected and disengage from education. They are at the highest level of risk of leaving school without a positive destination.

Second, subject teachers experience increased disruption in their classes and this in turn impacts on the educational progress of all pupils thereby reducing overall attainment. In this context and according to Census data 93% of pupils with Additional Support Needs are taught in mainstream classes all of the time. (Ref.: Appendix 2, Table 1.6) As part of the raising attainment agenda it would therefore be interesting, and indeed relevant, to consider each local authority's ASN staffing levels within the context of overall pupil performance. In other words, to recognise the importance of ASN staffing levels as a key component of the raising attainment agenda.

Third, subject teachers receive less support in class. In consequence a greater burden is placed on them as they attempt, often all alone, to manage the complex needs of pupils with additional support needs. This in turn leads to increased stress making these teachers less effective and, if they are unfortunate, more prone to stress induced illnesses thereby resulting in higher levels of absenteeism.

Our Conclusions and Recommendations

It is clear from available data that decreasing numbers of ASN teachers are being expected to meet the needs of an increasing number of ASN pupils. We believe that this is damaging to the educational welfare and life chances not only of those specific pupils but also of other pupils generally. We also believe that this expectation is detrimental to the working conditions of ASN Teachers and indeed of all other Teachers and that, as a result, there may be potentially grave consequences for those teachers and their families.

It is also clear - from both anecdotal evidence provided to us by our members and from the data (both our own FOI Request and the Government's Census data) - that there is inconsistency in the application of definitions pertaining to ASN and to the manner in which ASN Teachers are organised and deployed. There is no uniform or nationwide *system* of ASN provision and this makes it difficult to draw comparisons between Local Authorities simply from an examination of *raw data*. And whilst we understand that there are often good reasons for differences in the way in which provision is organised *geographically*, it strikes us that there are no good reasons for differences in nomenclature or in definition of job role/tasks nor, importantly in the assessment of pupils with an ASN.

We are also aware that there is a dearth of appropriate training for those teachers who wish to specialise in the ASN area.

It is for those reasons that we believe there needs to be in-depth analysis of ASN provision nationwide - looking at both pupil/teacher ratios, at training and at the way in which ASN is organised. All of this in order to ensure that the needs and rights enshrined in law of our most vulnerable learners are met within a fair and equitable system.

Accompanying papers:

APPENDIX 1_SSTA_FOI_Responses

APPENDIX 2 Extracts from Census Supplementary data 2016

Appendix 3_Census Statistics ASN 2016 _ in order of Pupil Numbers

EXTRACTS FROM Teachers in Scotland 2016 & 2010 and Pupils In Scotland 2016

APPENDIX 2

These publication can be found at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/12/9271>

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/12/01091355/0>

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/dspupcensus/dspupcensus16>

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[Table 3.9: Secondary school teachers by main subject taught and gender 2008-2016\(1\)](#)

[Table 3.17: Support staff in secondary schools, 2016 & Table 3.18: EXTRACT FROM Support staff in secondary schools, 2010](#)

Table 5.2: EXTRACT FROM Centrally employed teachers by main subject taught, 2016 &2010

Table 8.9: EXTRACT FROM Secondary school teachers by main subject taught and local authority, 2016(1)

Table 1.6: Integration of pupils with Additional Support Needs into mainstream classes, 2016(1)

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13/12/2016
13/12/2016
13/12/2016
13/12/2016

Appendix 3 - Census Statistics ASN, Secondary 2016 - arranged
by Total Number of Pupils (Sec.Sector only)

Local Authority	ASN Teachers	Pupil Support Assistants	Total ASN Staffing	Classroom Assistants	Total No. of Secondary Pupils	Free School Meals (FSM)	% FSM
Glasgow City	49	0	49	191	24377	6970	29
North Lanark.	49	127	176	53	20200	2966	14.6
Fife	94	182	276	62	19490	3168	16.3
South Lanark.	68	56	124	62	18123	2586	14.2
Edinburgh City	43	44	87	108	17817	1988	11
Aberdeenshire	119	129	248	0	14016	819	5.85
Highland	72	186	258	0	13095	1409	10.8
West Lothian	24	23	47	50	10518	1627	15.5
Renfrewshire	24	61	85	21	9668	1506	15.6
Falkirk	53	39	92	30	8448	1064	12.6
Aberdeen City	43	14	57	18	8570	786	9.2
Dumfries & G.	38	52	90	20	7841	995	12.7
North Ayrshire	36	0	36	69	7476	1528	20
East Renfrew.	31	67	98	8	7661	606	7.9
Perth & Kinross	41	43	84	24	7508	537	7.2
East Dunbarton.	17	49	66	6	7398	605	8.3
Dundee	53	51	104	6	6978	1656	24
East Ayrshire	48	0	48	86	6517	1090	17
Scottish Borders	11	52	63	1	6287	710	11.3
Angus	45	25	70	53	6212	683	11
South Ayrshire	39	0	39	65	6009	716	12
Stirling	22	25	47	35	5637	568	10
East Lothian	30	61	91	1	5498	457	8.3
West Dunbarton	20	39	59	17	5075	1221	24
Midlothian	16	7	23	44	4871	663	13.6
Moray	32	66	98	0	4941	406	8.2
Inverclyde	21	45	66	7	4171	881	21
Argyll & Bute	28	70	98	30	4522	446	9.9
Clackmannan.	14	10	24	30	2524	365	14.5
Eilean Sar	10	21	31	0	1451	103	7
Shetland	19	35	54	0	1365	61	4.5
Orkney	15	18	33	4	1111	81	7.2
TOTAL	1,224	1,597	2,821	1,101			