



## *The Management of Substitution Cover of Teachers*

As a result of a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland (December 2002)\* the need for on-going training in personal and professional development for substitute teachers has been highlighted.

Substitution cover in schools, involving a whole range of teachers, is a normal and unavoidable part of school management everywhere. Such cover may be required to address a planned or unexpected teacher absence and can be used to fill a teaching vacancy. It may be required due to the short term or long-term absence of permanent staff for such reasons as illness, maternity leave, secondment and professional development.

A whole range of teachers are employed to provide substitution cover, for example:

- Beginning teachers who are not yet in full-time employment;
- Teachers who are returning to teaching after a break in service; and
- Teachers who have taken early retirement and usually only wish to find occasional work.

It is in the school's interest to develop effective management of and support for teachers providing substitute cover. Every teacher within their school should be aware of the arrangements for substitute teachers.

### Guidance

Teachers providing substitution cover need support when new to a school and they need to familiarise themselves with pupils, colleagues, resources, procedures and policies.

While the following guidance may not be practicable in all circumstances, good practice on the induction of substitute teachers could include:

1. A designated permanent member of staff within the school being responsible for guiding substitute teachers during their time in the school.
2. Introduction to key personnel within the school e.g. subject head, head of key stage etc.
3. A brief tour of key locations within the school e.g. staff room, notice boards, general office, reprographics room etc.

4. Written general information, in the form of a small handbook or summary sheet, including school start and finish times; lesson times; lunch break times; lunch arrangements; register procedure; summary of school behaviour policy; accident procedures, emergency evacuation procedures, fire drill arrangements; wet play time arrangements etc.
5. Specific information on the class (es) to be taught e.g. number and names of pupils; work to be covered; any particular behavioural or special needs issues; name of classroom assistant if there is one; availability of resources.

For further ideas on the structure of a summary leaflet/handbook please consult the Teachers Education Partnership Handbook, Section 4 – School Induction Programme.

6. If a substitute teacher is in a school for a significant period of time he/she should be included/encouraged/given the opportunity to be involved in relevant school based training and or appropriate in-service training to the particular curriculum area they are working in.
7. Schools should ensure that the substitute teacher's progress is monitored, and that they receive timely feedback on their performance. Areas for development should be identified and supported.
8. Schools should regularly evaluate and review the procedures for managing sub teachers.

*\*The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Report of the N. Ireland Audit Office, 2002.  
Available from their website [www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/pubs/](http://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/pubs/)*