Progression Board Communication

The Teaching Assistant Progression Board met on 31 January 2018.

The meeting was chaired by Phil Hodgson, Head of Education. Teaching Assistant Representatives from UNISON and the GMB were in attendance. An officer from Human Resources was also in attendance, as was the Lead for Outreach Nursery Provision.

The primary focus of the meeting was a presentation by Jon Richards (Unison) with regard to the positive impact that Teaching Assistants can have on the education of children if they are well trained in the right things e.g. questioning skills to facilitate independent learning and utilised to the best effect within schools.

The information provided by Jon was very helpful in terms of thinking around the development of a programme for Durham schools to ensure that the contribution Teaching Assistants can make to education outcomes is recognised and supported.

It was agreed that Rob Webster from UCL, who has researched the role of Teaching Assistants in inclusive education, be contacted to support the development of such a programme in order that Durham schools can get the best use out of their Teaching Assistants. Work already in hand with Prof Rob Coe of Durham University about the effective deployment of Teaching Assistants will also be relevant in this.

Head Teacher representatives on the progression board were discussed and it is hoped that a number of Heads will be able to attend the next meeting.

Additionally Phil Hodgson agreed to share some of the headline messages from Jon’s presentation and the discussion which followed when he speaks to a wider group of head teachers at the forthcoming Director’s briefings.

The Council continues to work with Trade Unions to monitor the number of staff who are potentially facing a loss and to consider solutions to support any employees affected in this way.

Training priorities, including HLTA training, are also subject to ongoing discussion and the board will look to communicate progress on this as soon as possible.

A further update will be provided following the February meeting.