

teams. It is also vital that responsibility for referral is with class teachers, not the head teacher or TST teachers. One teacher needs to co-ordinate the work of the team using clear procedures for referral, conduct of meetings, analysis of the problems and design of interventions, implementation, records and follow up of interventions. In practice referrals are often concerned with behaviour problems, though many are also about learning difficulties. Not all referrals may be about individuals, some may be about groups or classes.

### Responses to TSTs in action

TST support can include providing emotional support and encouragement, specific approaches to managing behaviour, teaching strategies and consulting others, such as the headteacher, the educational psychologist and involving parents. On the basis of recent evaluations of TSTs, teachers appear to be supportive of the TST concept and its practice.

### Setting up TSTs in Schools

The evaluations show that setting up TSTs depends on clear and detailed initial communications and negotiations between the schools and those with the development ideas and training resource. This involves the heads and the whole staff in understanding what is involved, considering what the TST arrangement has to offer the school and then deciding to commit the school and the resources to enable TSTs to work. In addition to these factors, evaluation indicates the importance of the whole staff and head-teacher needing to support the principle of TSTs. School staffs would therefore be given the choice to adopt the TST approach and to design it to fit the school's particular circumstances and needs.

Preparing a school for a TST should involve enabling participating teachers to:

- be familiar with the concepts and principles of school based teacher support teams as providing peer support and meeting special educational needs
- understand the function, risks, constraints of designing and running teacher support teams

- have designed an appropriate teacher support team for their schools through consultation with colleagues.
- be aware of and sensitive to the needs and feelings of the teacher making requests for support.
- be proficient in
  - receiving requests for support
  - conducting meetings
  - liaising with parents and support services
  - making sense of teaching problems
  - devising appropriate forms of advice
  - assessing outcomes in the classroom
  - reviewing and evaluating the overall TST arrangement

Above all, team members need to be involved in simulations of the processes of analysing and conceptualising problems, deciding on intervention goals, planning and evaluating interventions. This involves consideration of issues common to many consultation settings such as active listening. If they are to function successfully TSTs need to be designed to fit the perceived needs of the schools by the TST team and their colleagues.

### How do arrangements work ?

When a TST is being planned in a school there a number of issues which need to be resolved. The following list may serve as an aide-mémoire:

1. who is the target population?
2. who can refer to the team?
  - some schools may wish to extend the TST principle to all staff including classroom assistants.
3. who serves on the team and who are they to be identified?
4. who co-ordinates the team?
5. receiving referrals.
  - how many referrals can be handled at one meeting
6. conducting meetings
  - timing of meetings
7. how to make use of others
  - parents, psychologists, advisory teacher
  - support services
8. how to co-ordinate and overlap with other support systems.
9. how to make recommendations and gain access to resources.