

Career progression case studies for support staff

Career progression case study: Saira Malik

I started working for London Borough of Ealing as a teaching assistant (TA) 14 years ago and at that time I had no idea about the amazing journey that I was about to begin.

From TA to NQT

My whole career from teaching assistant to 12 years later becoming an assistant headteacher has been within Ealing at Perivale Primary school and it has been the most extraordinary experience.

The transition from a teaching assistant to an NQT was nerve wrecking however the support I received from the school and Ealing Council in terms of courses and mentoring meant that I was ready to start my teaching career. From the onset I was encouraged to take the leap and become a qualified teacher even though at the time I didn't have any qualifications.

I started by enrolling on a foundation degree in special educational needs followed by BA Honours in Teaching. At the time I believed that my GCSE equivalent qualifications from Denmark (my place of birth) would be accepted to enter a teaching course however I was informed that I would have to gain new GCSE qualifications in English, science, and maths to complete the chosen course.

This meant that I was studying for the GCSE qualification and completing my teaching course simultaneously. This would not have been possible without the immense amount of support and guidance I received from my school. I was encouraged and motivated to complete and get through any hurdle to successfully achieve QTS.

Starting out as an NQT

The wide range of courses available in Ealing and the support available to ensure that you are on track has played a crucial role in my success. I enjoyed all the courses I attended and they provided me with a great insight into different subjects as well as assessment areas. With the support of the courses available and different meetings that are held regularly in Ealing, I was equipped with all the information and skills needed to get my pupils ready for assessments. It was also a perfect opportunity for me to network with other NQTs and qualified teachers from other schools in Ealing.

Once I qualified as an NQT, I continued to take advantage of the courses available to me and continued to attend networking meetings. I started to think about my career going forward and perhaps leading a subject once I had completed my NQT year. In my second year of teaching, I started leading maths at my school and again ensured that I was attending network meetings and courses linked to my subject.

I became a phase leader in my second year of teaching whilst also leading maths - this was my first experience of leadership. I enjoyed this immensely and soon became responsible for more areas around the school. My school had recently become a member of the Partners in Excellence (PIXL) partnership and I was deeply involved in developing and implementing the PIXL approach and strategies in my school.

The highlight for me was the opportunity to showcase PIXL to other heads and deputy teachers in Ealing who were interested in how we were using the partnership and the impact it was having. It was soon after that I was approached by a school within the Ealing Teaching Alliance to become a specialist leader in education (SLE). I received tailored training around the role of a SLE and how my knowledge and experience could be used to drive improvement in other settings.

Another major success of my early teaching career and leadership was during my teaching time in year 6 and preparing pupils for their end of key stage assessments(SAT's). Working closely with PIXL and my year 6 team we used innovative strategies in closing the gaps for all our pupils. That year Perivale Primary School achieved their best ever results and outcomes. This put the school in top 3 percent in the country.

After two years of leading a phase I had the opportunity to apply for an assistant head teacher vacancy that had become available at Perivale Primary School. I applied for the position and after a detailed interview process I was offered the position as an assistant head teacher in charge of Assessment. I continued my role as a maths and PIXL lead and continued to work closely with the year 6 team by delivering interventions and assessments.

I was given an extensive amount of support and mentoring from my deputy head who was previously in charge of assessment. With the support of the SLT, including my headteacher, DHT and my fellow Assistant Head who provided support and mentoring, I was encouraged to enrol on courses specific to my role as well as network with other assistant head teachers in Ealing.

I felt extremely supported within my role and actively encouraged to identify areas of leadership I wanted to develop further.

I am now in my second year as an assistant head teacher and I feel very confident within my role and responsibilities. I feel I am constantly developing as a leader and I am enjoying my role and responsibilities. My aspiration is to become a headteacher of a primary school in Ealing. I can't imagine working in a different borough and I strongly believe that Ealing will continue to support my aspirations by providing me with support and development opportunities. I am very keen on helping other teachers in education who would like to develop their roles and responsibilities.

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