

> Review of Specialist Classroom Teachers Pilot

Case Studies report prepared for the Ministry of Education

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August 2007

ISBN: 978-0-478-13702-6

ISBN (Web Copy): 978-0-478-13703-3

RMR-856

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> Introduction

During the review of the Specialist Classroom Teachers (SCT) pilot undertaken in 2006, twelve schools around New Zealand were visited to provide case studies of the implementation of the role. This report provides a summary of key information from these schools describing what the role looked like in practice in twelve very different schools. The full report, which is available from the Ministry of Education website, contains a discussion of key themes arising from the case studies, as well as a fuller discussion of findings from three of the cases (Kowhai, Karaka and Puka).

These case studies primarily showed how diverse the implementation of the SCT pilot was in schools and the extent to which school culture and leadership had played a part in determining what it looked like. It is important to note, from the outset, that in all instances participants were highly supportive of the role in general and of their SCT in particular. The case studies raised some interesting questions around what the role of the SCT really is and how the role can best be utilised to promote enhanced professional practice and to improve student outcomes.

> The diversity of implementation

The extent to which New Zealand schools are self-governing allows for a level of interpretation and individuality that is not common in other jurisdictions. As a result school culture and school leadership have an impact on how any initiative is implemented and the SCT pilot was no exception. What became clear throughout the review, and particularly in the case studies, was the diversity of implementation models to be found in 2006.

This diversity was shown in the way in which the role was developed along a number of continua as listed below:

- Continuum of Practice: Guidance Counsellor to Professional Mentor
- Continuum of Delivery: Individual teacher to whole school
- Continuum of Formality: Informal and non-structured support to structured whole school PD
- Continuum of Content: Classroom management to developing innovative teaching practice
- Continuum of Response: Reactive to proactive

Each of these continua is evidenced across the following case studies and are briefly summarised below.

Continuum of practice: Guidance counsellor to professional mentor

The SCT role was often described as being about relationships. It is the nature of those relationships which this continuum describes. This is an important continuum to consider as it sits at the heart of the purpose of the SCT role and its goal of enriching professional practice. It also explains much of the diversity found.

At the guidance counsellor end of the continuum SCTs supported teachers who were struggling personally and were often seen as a shoulder to cry on. At the other end, the professional mentor and coach worked with teachers to improve their practice, providing professional guidance and support. While there were some SCTs who were clearly one or the other many moved along this continuum depending largely on the needs of teachers they were working with.

Continuum of delivery: Individual teacher to whole school

The majority of SCTs reported working largely with individual teachers. Some spoke of undertaking whole school professional development but this appears to have been somewhat of an exception. Indeed, many seemed uncomfortable with the idea. More common, was for SCTs to work with small groups of teachers such as those teaching a particular class or year level, those from a specific department or interest group, or those involved in activities such as professional reading groups.

Continuum of formality: Informal and non-structured support through to structured whole school professional development

Most of the SCTs appear to have worked with teachers in a largely unstructured manner. In some instances this was reported as creating difficulties for the SCTs whose roles appear to have been somewhat nebulous and difficult to define or monitor as a result. However, as these case studies show, it is possible for the SCT role to also have a highly structured focus and clearly defined role. In some schools the SCT was focussed on key strategic goals related to pedagogy, in others they were working with clearly defined groups of teachers.

Continuum of content: Classroom management to developing innovative teaching practice

While the majority of the SCTs appeared to focus on generic classroom management others were focussed on introducing the staff at their school to new pedagogies and ideas. The latter were most common in those schools which already had a strong professional learning culture and where there was a clearly defined strategic goal related to staff professional development and teaching practice.

Continuum of response: Reactive to proactive

This continuum moves from a reactive model of implementation through to a proactive one. SCTs at the reactive end can be seen as responding directly to perceived problems or concerns; they are the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. At the proactive end SCTs, rather than responding to issues per se, work on enhancing teacher practice as a whole; that is they work at the top of the cliff to prevent accidents rather than waiting to pick up the pieces.

> Methodology

Visits to the school ranged in time from two to six hours with most being around five to six hours. Given participant concerns about confidentiality and the wide range of implementation models, the SCTs were not given a specific list of required data collection activities by the researcher. Rather, they were asked to arrange the visit in a way that they were comfortable with and which they felt would best showcase the implementation of the model in their school. They were, however, asked to ensure time was set aside for the researcher to speak with both the SCT and a member of senior management, preferably the principal. In addition, a request was made for interviews to be arranged with staff who had worked with the SCT, if at all possible.

In each school, with one exception, a range of interviews and/or focus groups were undertaken. In total 75 interviews were held across the twelve schools. Table one provides a breakdown of these interviews. In some cases SCTs provided the researcher with documentation including board reports, teacher surveys, personal logs and job descriptions. Focus groups were held in three schools although in these instances only two or three teachers were involved. The one exception was Rimu where only the SCT was interviewed although documentation was provided.

Table One: Summary of interview participants

School	SCT	SMgt	Mmgt	Teachers	PRT	Total
Kowhai	1	2	2	-	2	7
Rata	1	1	-	-	3	5
Rimu	1	-	-	-	-	1
Pahautea	1	2	1	2	2	8
Miro	1	2	1	-	2	6
Puka	1	1	-	3	-	5
Titoki	1	2	1	3	1	8
Karaka	1	2	1	-	1	5
Matai	1	1	-	-	3	5
Toru	1	3	-	2	2	8
Akeake	1	2	1	3	4	11
Rokaka	1	1	-	-	4	6
Total	12	19	7	13	24	75

> AkeAke school

School culture and context

AkeAke is a large, co-educational school. The school has a strong professional learning focus and teachers are encouraged to participate in a range of school-initiated professional learning activities. Professional learning is led by a facilitation team that includes seven teachers and the principal. The professional learning in the school is voluntary. The team believes in trying to get teachers to decide what they are interested in learning and improving and in this way getting real change and 'rejuvenation'.

Senior management in this school were disappointed with the model that was initially described in the formal documentation. They were worried that it was undefined, not pushing boundaries and that it was 'boring'. There was a concern that if it was not utilised properly it could become a wasted resource. This school has been on a professional learning path for some time and it may be that other schools need to move through a simpler model in the beginning stages so that the move to a professional learning culture is more scaffolded.

The SCT role was described by a member of senior management as being a facilitator rather than an expert who coordinated the professional learning of other staff members. Her role was to create opportunities for broader communication and to work towards removing feelings of isolation and defensiveness amongst the staff. This was part of a desire to further a move towards open classrooms across the school. Part of the value of the involvement of the SCT was that she was seen as a peer and a colleague, rather than as management.

The activities and impact of the SCT

This school had already developed a significant focus on professional learning within the school. They had developed a model where teachers worked together and 'fed off each other' and this was seen as successful. There were a number of other avenues of professional learning for teachers who were struggling (HoDs and senior management) and this was not seen as a valuable use of the SCT resource.

In this school the SCT role was highly structured with very specific foci around certain groups of teachers. The principal saw the SCT model as a valuable means of enhancing the professional learning initiatives operating in the school. As a result the SCT facilitated these activities along with other senior staff. This meant she was working with receptive teachers who had largely self-selected into specific learning activities.

In 2006, the SCT facilitated a number of activities including a professional learning group centred on one class, the Provisionally Registered Teachers (PRTs) and a peer coaching group. Of these, the class learning group had been functioning for some time but the others were new in 2006. There was some crossover amongst these teachers, some of whom were in more than one activity.

Peer coaching began with six experienced teachers who had expressed an interest in 2005 or were invited to join the group. Each worked with a peer in a reciprocal agreement, taking turns at being observed. The cycle of peer coaching involved a planning conversation, observation and conversation afterwards. In 2006, the SCT facilitated the programme and was involved in it as one of the peer coaches. The SCT facilitated a meeting with the group every three or four weeks to discuss templates and to reflect on their teaching. There was a strong sense from the teachers interviewed, that the meetings needed to be facilitated to be successful. Tasks undertaken by the SCT included sending out reminders, offering suggestions of what to do next, providing resources and organising relief teachers for observations. One of the members of this group spoke of how being involved had helped him to set goals and plan, to be more comfortable with being observed and to focus on key issues. He felt that there was gentle pressure placed on him to try new things. Another spoke of how he and his peer coach had decided to undertake random observations rather than planned ones. In this way he felt they saw 'real lessons'. At the end of Term 2 the peer coaching model was opened up to the teachers' group and to the English learning area. As a result, at the time of the researcher visit in 2006, there were 14 teachers involved in peer coaching. The intention was to continue to grow this in 2007.

Class learning teams had been in action at the school for about five years by 2006. In this initiative, teachers of a junior class met to share and discuss teaching and learning strategies and to address any issues. The SCT worked with the teachers of one class in 2006 with the aim of deprivatising practice. This began with the teachers meeting as a group to talk about the students and their learning, then shadowing the class for a day, observing another teacher from their team and completing a common observation sheet. There was also a second observation. At the time of the visit in 2006, the next step was to involve students in the meetings, allow them to observe collaborative learning techniques and to provide feedback to their teachers.

The role of the SCT, in the group she facilitated, was to lead meetings, and to ensure there was a focused purpose to what they were doing. She did not teach the class herself. In the previous year, one of the teachers from this group had been in a class learning team which was not facilitated. He reported that the group had found it much more difficult to work and had tended to focus on one small area only. The feeling was an external person, such as the SCT, provided balance and a detached overview.

Those teachers spoken to felt that the professional conversations they held in the team 'sowed seeds' and helped them push their classes in new directions. In reality, the difference between what was happening in the class learning teams and in the peer coaching sessions was closely related in purpose and nature.

New teachers' professional learning was for all teachers new to the school, not solely for beginning teachers. It involved five after-school workshops that introduced new staff to the school culture and provided them with opportunities to network and collaborate. The workshops focused on reflection and feedback with links to other external initiatives, classroom management, different pedagogical techniques and an introduction to peer coaching and resource sharing.

In her work with PRTs, and as part of the new teachers group, the SCT allowed the teachers to explore options and to share opinions amongst themselves. She also provided a forum for them to ask questions of both each other and herself. The PRTs viewed her role as an extension of the coaching they had experienced at teachers' college. As a result of working with the SCT, the PRTs interviewed commented that they felt less restricted to their departments because they were able to share ideas across curriculum areas.

The SCT was not the only person to work with PRTs as there was also a PRT coordinator. The general opinion was, however, that there were differences between the two support models. This appeared to be related to the extent to which they shared opinions and ideas amongst themselves, and with second year teachers who joined the group at times when working with the SCT. In addition to the meetings, the SCT provided a lot of informal support. There were many flexible sessions, which were designed to meet the teachers' needs and to provide opportunities to explore, investigate and research different ways to do things. The teachers saw the support offered by the SCT as focusing more on a broad range of strategies rather than the 'content' support offered by HoDs.

A new teacher to the school was also interviewed. This teacher spoke of how the SCT had familiarised her with the culture and the thinking within the school. The SCT gave her the opportunity to become familiar not only with the systems, but also teaching and learning ideals. The workshops facilitated by the SCT were described as an open forum in which teachers were able to present ideas and knowledge themselves. She also commented on how useful it was to observe other teachers in order to pick up on simple things such as not praising students enough. It helped her focus on the positive and gave her confidence.

The value and status of the role

AkeAke school viewed the SCT role as adding value and allowing professional learning to occur in more depth. The SCT was described as an integral part of the school. There were several other initiatives happening in the school and the addition of the SCT role had enabled these initiatives to be extended.

This school felt that the role should be structured with a clear job description from the outset, so the SCT was not 'floating around'. This also allowed other people in the school to be aware of the SCT role.

One of the teachers interviewed saw the SCT role as being about people getting together, providing resources and information. They also felt the SCT needed to be sufficiently knowledgeable to provide advice. The SCT role was seen as important in providing subtle pressure and 'great' ideas of what to do rather than making teachers comply with the schools professional learning initiatives.

> Kowhai school

School culture and context

A strong professional learning culture was in its emergent stages at Kowhai in 2006. This development was being driven by the senior management team and was a school initiative rather than an externally driven programme. The school was undertaking a professional learning programme aimed at quality teaching and learning, facilitated by an external consultancy. This had resulted in a schoolwide focus on teaching and learning strategies such as co-operative learning. This focus had necessitated a shift in culture to allow for open dialogue between heads of department, senior management and teachers about their practice and experiences. Classroom observations were seen as an important feature of the culture shift. In addition, the "reflective practitioner model" was actively promoted by the school and it was reported that the staff had made substantial shifts over a few years.

Comments made in the interviews indicated that the school was already moving towards a deprivatisation of practice, which could make the SCT role easier to implement. There appeared to be a natural fit between school culture, school vision and the SCT role of supporting quality teaching and learning. It was suggested by one senior management teacher that the SCT was guiding the culture of the school down different pathways to those previously followed. The senior management team were fully supportive of what the SCT was doing and had ensured she was not working in isolation. For example, they attended the professional reading group whenever possible as a means of endorsing what was happening. The SCT role within this context was perceived as a resource and a way of meeting a need, which complemented what was already being done.

The SCT job description

While no formal job description was provided, the role of the SCT was partially explained by the teachers. The school had a professional learning team, which included the two deputy principals; one of whom was responsible for overall professional learning strategies and the other who was responsible for PRTs. The SCT was included in this team, with direct involvement in the classrooms.

It was understood that the SCT would work with teachers identified as needing help and support to reach a desired standard. However, it was not seen as the role of the SCT to decide whether the standard had been reached or not.

The activities and impact of the SCT

To ensure staff were aware of her new role and what she could offer them, the SCT created a pamphlet which outlined her role and the types of activities she would be undertaking. Her appointment was put on the notice board and she gave a presentation to the staff about her role. She also made ongoing announcements in staff meetings inviting staff to talk to her or to visit her class.

The school felt there was a need to make teachers more aware of the purpose of the SCT role and to clarify that it was not intended to simply support those teachers with poor management skills or to provide a 'shoulder to cry on'. One teacher commented that she felt there was a tendency to forget the SCT was there. Teachers who had worked with the SCT were open about discussing what they had achieved, and this had helped to raise the profile of the role. The SCT herself was concerned about what she saw as a lack of 'busyness' at times and wondered whether it might not be necessary to 'nudge' some teachers.

A successful initiative introduced by the SCT was the professional reading group, which met weekly to discuss selected readings. One of the pieces of evidence reported by a teacher as proof of its success was the way the discussions, which started in the group, spilled out into daily school life and conversations. One teacher reported that some material from these sessions was directly applicable to her classroom and those of others. The example she gave was the readings and discussions around boys' education. Another experienced teacher, who attended the group, spoke of how the ideas inspired debate and dialogue amongst the teachers and 'stirred teachers up'. In this instance it seemed the professional reading group was providing experienced teachers with a chance to reflect on their own practice in an informed way and to trial and develop different strategies. Coffee and biscuits were provided and the meetings appeared to be viewed as an opportunity to meet colleagues on a professional level, which was at the same time social. The coffee and biscuits were seen as adding to the culture and making it a more enjoyable experience.

Much of its success was attributed to the way the SCT had set it up and the culture of the group, which was entirely voluntary. The meetings were described as an open forum in which the teachers could speak freely in a safe environment. While the SCT provided many of the readings, participants were also encouraged to bring materials, which meant the choice of readings was not driven by the interests of the SCT alone and this was seen as one of the key reasons for its success. Despite, or perhaps because of its voluntary nature, there had been up to 12 participants including senior management members at times. This was nearly 25% of the full time staff of the school.

It was felt that the numbers attending was at least partly due to the SCT herself and the fact that people wanted to support her in what she was trying to do. The SCT was well prepared and brought a lot of professional knowledge to the meetings including a wide range of relevant research. At the time of the case study visit, consideration was being given to running a second group.

One PRT described, in detail, how the SCT had helped her with a class. She initially approached the SCT because she had struggled with the class for a full term and felt she was getting nowhere. After listening to the PRT's concerns the SCT suggested some things that could be done over the holidays. She also provided some key readings and suggested some other teachers for the PRT to talk to who had encountered similar situations.

The result was the PRT did a lot of reflection over the holidays and then came back and talked things through with the SCT. This was followed by a classroom observation and a feedback session about the class, the instigators of the problems and basic classroom management strategies for

implementation. Following this observation the SCT regularly 'popped into' the class and spoke informally with the teacher in the staffroom to check progress. Finally, the SCT undertook another full observation of the class to provide the teacher with feedback on the progress made.

A second PRT asked the SCT to observe her class and note the extent to which boys and girls contributed in the classroom environment to ensure there was a gender balance. The SCT did so and highlighted the different interactions and responses for the teacher during a one-hour feedback session. She also confirmed the pedagogies needed to counter any imbalance. Another piece of guidance provided to this PRT related to how to deal with external noise in the classroom as her teaching room was above the gymnasium. The SCT suggested transferring to other rooms which were available for the teacher to use. As with the first story, this teacher spoke of how the SCT interacted with the students and got involved in the lesson as well as providing formal feedback. This natural involvement seemed to have made classroom observations by the SCT a non-threatening activity.

Reporting and accountability processes

The SCT reported regularly to the deputy principal in charge of professional learning. They met weekly for about half an hour during which the SCT reflected on her week and discussed the things that came out of that reflection. Minutes were kept of each meeting and they showed there had been a shift in the nature of the meetings from the beginning where attempts had been made to be more analytical and to gather data and to provide feedback to the staff. While this idea had not been totally abandoned at the time of the interviews, the feeling was they did not have enough training or expertise to do this properly.

Intended changes to the role and job description for 2007

There was a sense that the role would be redefined in 2007 to reflect both a greater awareness of what could be achieved and the changing needs within the school. As new staff would be joining the school, the SCT role was seen as critical in supporting them to adapt to the culture and to help them put the expected teaching and learning strategies in place. There was a desire expressed to provide more structure to the role and to more closely align it with the strategic goals of the school.

The value and status of the role

The value and status of the role in this school appears to have been somewhat ambivalent. One of the senior managers interviewed commented that a lack of perceived status was augmented by the confidentiality surrounding the role and the self-referral requirement, which had meant that many teachers could not see the positive outcomes of the SCT initiative in their school and as such had not utilised the support offered.

It was also felt that the role of the SCT and the PRTs needed to be clarified. The school had 13 PRTs in 2006. The school's PRT programme was well established and coordinated by one of the deputy

principals and the SCT expressed some confusion as to why the SCT programme was linked to PRTs. As a result this SCT was working only with those PRTs who had self-referred to her or who were obviously in need of additional support such as those who were interviewed for the review.

Others, while seeing value in what was being achieved, did not see the role as having any real status. It seemed that any real status it did have was due to the professional authority and persona the SCT herself had in the school and the respect afforded to her rather than to the role.

> Miro school

School culture and context

In this school the role of the individual teacher is highly respected and there appear to be few meetings or formal opportunities for professional discussion across the staff and few opportunities for the SCT to address the whole staff. Privatised practice and professional autonomy appear to be strongly embedded. The SCT role was seen as something new which did not readily fit with the culture of the school. As a result only three or four teachers applied for the role out of a total staff of 150.

Initially, there was apparently some resentment from the staff about the time allowance and the implied promotion. For instance the SCT was given a large office including a meeting table and working areas. Despite these concerns, the senior management team believed that, given time, the role would be accepted. The SCT, therefore, kept the role small in 2006 and was observed to be taking a sensible approach to developing the role.

The SCT commented on having felt the need to 'justify' both her time and position. Comments from other staff had created a feeling that she needed to be nice all the time and that she could not be herself. While these initial concerns had made the job uncomfortable at times she did feel she would remain an SCT and that things were improving as she relaxed more.

The activities and impact of the SCT

Despite the difficulty of talking formally to the staff, or to groups of teachers, the SCT had worked hard to 'publicise' her role. She talked to HoDs, made announcements to the staff where possible and appeared in the school magazine.

There were a large number of PRTs in the school with seven first year teachers in 2006. This meant a large proportion of the SCT's time was taken up with the PRTs. As part of her work with the PRTs she held a regular weekly meeting with them which was a general debrief session discussing issues they were facing and sharing experiences. For these meetings, the SCT also prepared topics for discussion such as teaching diverse learners, teaching gifted and talented students and classroom strategies. The SCT also arranged guest speakers for the meetings and facilitated the observation of other classes amongst the PRTs which then provided the basis for shared discussion. The PRTS saw these meetings

as an extension of their teachers' college experience and it was felt by at least one teacher that the SCT had helped them become teachers through the meetings she facilitated.

Interestingly, as with one other SCT, she was also the appraiser of one of the PRTs and as such had observed classes and reported on his teaching towards his registration. Both the PRT and the SCT felt there was no conflict, as appraisal was not intended to be a negative process. This lack of conflict with appraisal was similar to other schools. The potential conflict appeared to be with attestation which is generally kept separate from the appraisal process.

Another focus was on the induction of teachers new to the school. The SCT had facilitated an induction programme for all such teachers. This had included showing them around the school and introducing them to key staff.

The SCT had also followed a disruptive class around observing them with a range of teachers. One of these teachers had been perceived as someone who was 'struggling' with the class. The lesson the SCT saw was excellent and she was able to provide positive feedback. As a result, it appears that the teacher regained some of his enthusiasm and motivation – or perhaps self-belief, and his teaching had improved.

In addition, the SCT had worked with one particular department at the request of the HoD. The department had a goal of increasing student participation. The SCT was asked to observe classes and provide a written report to each teacher on this goal as well as make some recommendations. The HoD was concerned about one teacher in particular and the SCT was seen by the HoD as an independent source to undertake this task allowing the HoD to maintain a working relationship with her colleague. The HoD felt she could not ask another HoD to undertake the observations because of timetable constraints and it was not their role. In addition, the experience of the SCT as an HoD in England meant that her judgement could be trusted.

Specific activities undertaken included:

- The creation of a reading library in her office from which teachers could borrow books
- The creation of an online reflective reading site
- Shadowing a disruptive class to provide feedback to the teachers concerned
- Providing induction programmes for staff new to the school including tours of the school to ensure they were aware of resources and facilities available.

Intended changes to the role and job description for 2007

In 2006 the focus had been primarily on PRTs. However, if this were not the case the SCT expressed a desire to focus on a particular area of teaching and learning such as homework. Another suggestion, from a senior management member, was to follow up the work done in 2006 with the year-2 teachers if there were no year-1 teachers. Alternatively it was suggested that the SCT work with a group of older teachers to encourage and energise them.

The value and status of the role

The SCT felt that the role needed more authority and that principals needed to 'sell it' to ensure it had sufficient status. She took on the role because she felt she could make a difference in the school but she now felt that to achieve real change the role needed to be equivalent to a DP, with responsibility for teaching and learning. Another teacher also suggested the SCT role be given more status – at least equivalent to an HoD with between two and four management units allocated. Both these instances are suggesting status based on traditional role authority or status symbols such as management units.

The PRTs saw the value of the role as that of a mentor similar to their experience at teachers' college. The SCT was described as an entry point into the school and as someone neutral who could be counted on to be objective and to discuss things in confidence.

> Pahautea school

School culture and context

This school had undergone a difficult period and was in the process of rebuilding its culture in 2006. As a result, some historical issues were perceived as remaining at the time of the review. The staff were still divided over these issues and this was noted as an obstacle to successful whole school professional learning. Due to the climate of the school the staff was described as defensive. These factors suggest the SCT may have had a difficult context to work in and one of the senior management suggested the SCT needed to work through a lot of 'baggage' carried by some of the staff before she could really begin to make a difference.

The SCT felt that one of the biggest barriers was the perception that she was there to criticise rather than to work with teachers to improve practice and that teachers felt threatened by her. She felt there was a need for teachers to understand that they needed to support each other and work as a team and in this way workloads and stress could be reduced.

The school had a very strong and positive appraisal system and the SCT was one of the appraisers elected/nominated by a committee. Appraisal was seen as closely linked to professional learning and to setting of targets and goals rather than critiquing teachers. Therefore, there was no perceived issue with the SCT also having an appraisal role as it was separate to attestation which was undertaken by the HoD. The appraiser provided feedback and feed forward, and ensured the teacher set and met targets. All appraisal work was between the appraiser and the teacher and had a strong professional learning focus. In this way the SCT role was seen as supporting the appraisal process in the school. The SCT felt it was easy to differentiate between her roles as an appraiser and as an SCT and the teachers she worked with in both capacities supported this view.

The activities and impact of the SCT

The SCT outlined her role to the staff at the start of the year. She explained that she would be a support person for them with the aim of improving things in the classroom. She felt that her role included being someone to talk to, to unwind with and to share ideas with. She also saw her role as assisting with classroom management, teaching strategies and the preparation of resources. In her view there were deans and other guidance staff to support students but nothing for teachers prior to the SCT role. In this way this SCT appeared to closely align her role to that of a guidance counsellor but for teachers not students.

The school was part of an external initiative to improve student achievement and the role of the SCT was seen as complementing this. The SCT expressed the hope that through visiting each others' classrooms as part of this initiative, teachers and students would get used to people in their classrooms and this would develop more trust between colleagues.

She had tried running a number of workshops providing teachers with a range of creative and critical thinking strategies some of which she had tried, others she had not. However, these whole staff sessions were not well received by the staff. She had also run sessions for HoDs and PRTs and visited classrooms when invited as a result of these sessions. She had put a display board in the corridor to share ideas with the staff, such as starter activities, and had made herself available to discuss these with interested staff.

She found longer serving teachers more difficult to work with than the younger teachers who appeared more willing to accept help. Although she invited people to visit her classroom at any time she had been disappointed with the numbers who accepted at the time of the pilot. In her opinion there was a need to develop an 'open door' culture in the school, but this was proving difficult in 2006. Despite these concerns others felt she was doing well. It was felt she had achieved some success in breaking down the barriers between teachers through professional conversations and strategies, had consolidated the achievement initiative in the school and had put the focus back on teaching in line with the school values.

One of the teachers she had worked with explained how the SCT had worked with her on differentiated learning and classroom management. Strategies the SCT had discussed included cooperative learning techniques.

A focus group was held with four teachers from the same department, who spoke of how they had worked with the SCT. One teacher with ten years' experience had issues with organising her paper work, which impacted on her efficiency and she had felt that the task had become too large to tackle. The SCT spent a day with her in the holidays organising things and providing useful strategies for ongoing management. In this sense she provided very 'hands on' and practical support and the teacher concerned felt that things were now in place for the next year (2007).

The second teacher, in this focus group, had worked with the SCT as part of the PRT programme. The SCT had taken sessions on teaching strategies including starters and closers. She had also observed the teacher working with two classes that had behavioural problems and had provided feedback.

The third teacher had taken part in some after school workshops on higher level thinking which the SCT had offered through an open invitation to all staff. He commented that these were not well attended, however, and on one occasion only two teachers attended. The SCT had observed two of his lessons where he used the teaching strategies introduced in the workshop. This approach of providing friendly pressure was perceived by this teacher as more valuable than simply going on a course. This teacher was also part of the achievement initiative, which involved a group of teachers in peer observations and coaching exercises including the sharing of best practice. The work with the SCT was seen as a continuation of this work.

The fourth teacher had been teaching for eight years and was a new appointment as an HoD at the start of 2006. As with another teacher, the SCT had also been his appraiser, which is possibly what provided the entrée for them both to work together. This teacher had come from a vastly different school and the difference in school culture, coupled with his first appointment as an HoD, meant he valued the support. He felt that while he would have settled in over time it was much easier with someone to talk to and the professional and emotional support offered by the SCT.

This HoD was concerned that his department had not been aware of the SCT role and had not thought sufficiently about the opportunities that this role afforded. As a result he asked the SCT to observe a year 10 class and to look at student-student interactions. This had proved beneficial and within three weeks most of the department had used the SCT services in some way.

The SCT had not needed to work with PRTs to the same extent as some other SCTs because the associate principal in the school ran a comprehensive programme as PRT coordinator. She did, however, attend PRT meetings and the PRT coordinator had referred people to the SCT where appropriate. Reasons for referral included when the PRT:

- was the only teacher in their department
- needed support with strategies for a difficult class
- struggling with a differentiated curriculum as they were new to the school
- needing a boost to their confidence

In these situations the SCT had observed a couple of lessons and given positive feedback. When working this way she was described, by a senior manager, as an extra HoD and an extra pair of expert eyes who could tweak problem areas. Her role was also seen as similar to that of a dean or guidance counsellor providing confidential support which was not part of any appraisal system and offered a viable alternative to the more formal attestation path.

Activities undertaken by the SCT included:

- classroom observations

- tracking students to see how they work with different teachers and providing feedback to the teachers
- one-one debriefing with staff
- Facilitating workshops to which the whole staff are invited with voluntary attendance
- providing material for staff through a display board outside the staff room

This work occurred outside of school time. At times the SCT had taken teachers out for coffee to debrief.

Reporting and accountability processes

The SCT reported each term to the principal and the board. This was in writing and included her aims for the term and a breakdown of her activities and time as well as some general thoughts. It was intended to review the role at the end of 2006.

Intended changes to the role and job description for 2007

There was no intention on the part of the senior management team to change much for 2007 although they intended to develop the role further. It was hoped that the SCT would be able to work more in classrooms and that she would become more confident in approaching people.

The value and status of the role

The Pahautea SCT expressed a belief that the role should sit more clearly in the school structure. She believed that while the principal saw her as equivalent to a middle manager other teachers did not and as a result she often felt she did not really belong anywhere. While she had been invited to HoD meetings it was made clear that it was as an invited guest only.

There appeared to be a 'fine line' between the role of the SCT, the HoDs and the PRT co-ordinator. This was seen as needing to be more defined and could be one of the factors leading to some confusion over the status and responsibilities of the SCT.

The background of the SCT appears to have made the status question particularly sensitive. Both the SCT and others interviewed saw the role as a backward step in status, as the SCT was no longer part of the decision making HoD committee and therefore seen as 'out of the loop'. It was suggested by the senior management team that this was something that should, and probably would, be changed.

> Karaka school

School culture and context

This school had a very strong focus on professional learning which was led and promoted from the top. The school had gone through rapid growth in recent years and the principal felt much of his time to date had been spent worrying about buildings and other material concerns. He was now able to concentrate on teaching and learning again and the SCT was seen as a valuable resource to further develop this focus.

At the school the senior management team had been renamed the senior leadership team and the SCT had become part of this team. In this capacity, she was involved in strategic decision making and her role was highly valued and perceived as having status. This senior team were focused on teaching and learning and on really challenging the whole staff. The school was described by the senior leadership team as having an 'open door' professional culture with only a few teachers reluctant to seek advice or support from the SCT or someone else. This was in part due to the policy whereby senior leadership visited each classroom every day to collect absences and in this way were visible around the school.

There was strong agreement amongst participants that the staff and the school were ready and able to make the kinds of changes implicit in the SCT model. One of the senior leaders commented that there were no teachers in the school who would not accept change. Another teacher agreed that most of the staff were willing to try different things and those who did not stood out from the rest.

When the SCT role was first introduced to schools by the MoE, its focus was on supporting beginning teachers. Karaka school was eager to use the support to change the behaviour of teachers. As there was already a strong PRT programme running there was no perceived need for the SCT role in this area. The implementation of the SCT role also coincided with a decision to focus on differentiated learning in the school and the SCT role was seen as a key resource for introducing differentiated learning and facilitating this change. In this context the SCT felt that the focus on differentiated learning had been very valuable because it was not threatening and focused people on their practice rather than the SCT.

It would seem from these comments, and others, that the SCT role at this school was a resource to promote the type of teaching and learning culture that the senior leadership team were already trying to achieve. It was suggested that things had been tried in the past but had failed due to a lack of resourcing. The SCT role had, therefore, been a catalyst to ensure these things happened.

This 'fit' between the school culture, its goals and values, and the SCT pilot were, perhaps, best exemplified by one teacher who felt that the SCT role had enabled the school to really focus on their core function and as a result there was an orchestrated rather than a fragmented approach. In this case the SCT was described as the 'conductor' bringing it all together.

The SCT job description

The job description for this SCT clearly outlined the expectations of the role. The key purpose of the role was to “have the major leadership role in developing and promoting ‘quality teaching’ within the school”. The SCT’s task was to “support and assist teachers in the expansion of their knowledge, skills and teaching techniques to improve effectiveness”.

The job description also outlined a number of activities the SCT was expected to undertake. These included:

- introducing and supporting the school’s focus on differentiated learning
- encouraging collaboration and a supportive collegial culture
- assisting staff in teaching and learning
- modelling good practice.

For the SCT there had been some initial concern over the different approach the school had taken and she did feel uncomfortable at cluster meetings as a result. She commented that it would have been helpful if the initial brief had been wider and some thought given to ‘helping practice’. It would seem that this school had, in many ways, moved straight to the model of professional learning which the stakeholders would like to see in all schools but which they had felt would need more time to implement.

The activities and impact of the SCT

One of the key activities of the SCT was to lead staff-wide professional learning on differentiated learning. A specific time slot was set aside for this. There was also an after school staff meeting for which she organised a range of activities. In some instances, teachers presented what they had tried and found successful in their own classrooms. In this way the resources and ideas were modelled in the staffroom. The presenters were all highly enthusiastic staff who had been on courses, or had come back from tasks they had been given by the SCT, and who wanted to share their experiences. One of the SCT’s key roles, therefore, was facilitating the sharing and showcasing of best practice and making sure everyone was aware of what was going on in other classes. In this way, the SCT used the strengths of the rest of the staff to support her work and this seems to have been a very successful approach. It took the focus away from her and put it onto teaching practice. It also meant a deprivatising of practice and a normalising of sharing professional learning in a collegial environment. It was commented by one teacher that the staff were now trying things they would never have attempted once.

As well as leading whole-school professional learning sessions, the SCT provided teachers with appropriate resource material. There was a differentiated learning site on the school intranet which the SCT ensured had a range of material on it. Teachers could download and adapt this material to meet their needs and were also encouraged to add or contribute to this site. In addition, the SCT often provided staff with material in their pigeonholes including pointing them to new websites.

Another task initiated by the SCT was the development of a professional library in the workroom. These actions had enabled her to ensure common messages were delivered to the whole staff. As a result it was felt the teachers were more reflective about their practice and open to trying new things.

While the focus was primarily on whole staff development as a means of shifting teaching practices, the SCT also worked with two teams of teachers on specific tasks. In the first instance she worked with two teachers to develop new units of work in their teaching area and then to trial them. These units focused on differentiated learning. This worked well and the group had been encouraged to reach higher levels of independence. Later in 2006 she withdrew some support. In this way it was a very scaffolded approach. The initial sessions had involved some team planning with an emphasis on differentiation. A whole day was then spent making resources as a team and creating a unit to be used in the future. This cooperative team learning approach was also successful with another group who worked on integrating year 9 classes to try and counter the issues associated with the transition from year 8.

In both instances, the focus was on changing teacher practice to better meet the needs of students. By introducing new strategies and ideas and then reflecting on the extent to which these had been successful, the whole school approach was a proactive rather than reactive model. It was aimed at moving teachers forward rather than focusing on problems. This focus on the positive was commented on by the SCT as a key principle to both her activities and her success.

The SCT also worked within the whānau pastoral care system to shift practice. Each term there had been a different focus for the whānau teachers to work on with their classes and with the whānau as a whole. These foci were based around 'habits of mind' and the first one was persistence followed by questioning. While the teacher who described this was not a whānau teacher, she commented that when she looked at the material that was available on the intranet to support the whānau, she realised that it was about better teaching in general and useful to the whole staff. Again the SCT was focusing on a particular teaching and learning strategy to improve practice in general.

For the SCT, one of the ways in which she could see the impact she was having was through self-report from other teachers who provided evidence of change. In some instances she had been invited to classrooms to see the results of a new idea a teacher had had. One example she gave was of a year 11 science teacher who had differentiated a question in a chemistry class with both a low ability and a high ability group. In another instance she had visited a year 8 class where the teacher had invited the parents in to see the students' presentations using PowerPoint and other things. Another example suggesting success was that the professional library she had set up was being well utilised with books being used regularly.

Interestingly, the principal suggested that the literacy person was more likely to work in classrooms with teachers because she had more time. The implication of this comment was to reinforce the idea that the SCT role had been very differently implemented in this school. However, the literacy teacher and the SCT were seen as working closely together. Additionally, HoDs were often released to observe in classrooms. The principal did suggest this was a way the role could shift and the SCT commented

that she had just started to do some classroom work. For example, an experienced teacher had come to her to ask if she could help with a problem class.

Intended changes to the role and job description for 2007

Along with three other schools in the region, Karaka applied for EHSAS (Extending High Standards Across Schools) funding in 2006. These schools saw the SCT role as a crucial one for the advancement of teaching and learning practice across the cluster. The goal was for SCTs to provide each other with collegial support and share resources which would in turn benefit the individual schools.

For the SCT, the challenge for 2007 was to see whether the work she had done in 2006 was sustained in the long term. While 2006 had been spent introducing a lot of ideas to people, it was intended that 2007 would be about re-focusing and revisiting those things in different ways. As a result, one of the things she wanted to see in 2007 was a more structured way of gathering evidence of success, such as including differentiated learning outcomes in the appraisal process. In this way she felt teachers could be looking for indicators that differentiated learning was making a difference. At the time of the interview she felt differentiated learning was happening in a vacuum.

The value and status of the role

As already mentioned, the SCT in this school was part of the senior leadership team. This had provided the role with real status and a clearly articulated value. The decision to do so was seen as showing the staff that the senior leadership was serious about the role. The role, however, was not seen as a management one and it was viewed as important that it was not.

The SCT commented that being on the senior leadership team had been really helpful as it allowed her to have some influence and to provide a different perspective to the leadership team. She felt that she added some balance to the senior team and provided an opportunity for senior leaders to focus on things other than administration. The role also seems to have meant staff meetings were focussed more on teaching and learning than administration.

The principal hoped that the school could have reached the point it had arrived at without the SCT, but he also felt that the role had given them a huge impetus and that it had meant he could insist the SCT drove the changes forward. He also felt that the role gave some legitimacy to her place on the senior leadership team, which was seen as very valuable.

The role very clearly met a need and solved a specific problem for the school. What is important to note here is the extent to which this school was already open to, and ready for, the long term goals of the SCT role in terms of increasing professionalism and of developing professional learning cultures aimed at enhancing student achievement. The model implemented was very proactive and was not focused on fixing problems but rather on moving everyone towards a common goal. What was not clear here was how the school had reached this level of willingness or whether the SCT could have driven the change earlier in the process.

In addition, it seems that the nature of the SCT role in this school meant that it was very transparent, everyone knew who the SCT was and what she did. This was primarily seen as being due to her high profile at staff meetings. The feeling was that all teachers were using something that the SCT had prepared or presented. This added to both the perceived value and status of the role. It was not a role hiding in the shadows as seems to have been the case at some other schools.

> Matai school

School culture and context

This was a smaller, rural school. The principal was interested in making changes to the structure of the school to place a higher value on the leadership of teaching and learning rather than management. In 2006 there were a number of initiatives in the school aimed at enhancing student achievement and the SCT was expected to support these. These initiatives and the schoolwide focus on teaching and learning meant there was already a lot of professional learning implemented in the school. It also meant there were other teacher leaders working in the school, undertaking observations and providing feedback to staff. The SCT worked alongside these teachers.

There was a sense that the culture in the school was changing and that teachers were beginning to feel comfortable in asking for support or help. There was also open celebration of success with successful practice shared at morning break.

The SCT had not originally applied for the job as she had been put off by the eligibility criteria. However, when no one else applied the principal asked her to take it on for the pilot year. At the time of the case study visits in August/September 2006 she felt she was more confident in the role and that she would continue with it.

The SCT job description

There was a job description available when the role was advertised. This included tasks, outcomes and success criteria. A key task in the job description was mentoring PRTs and providing support for other teachers when requested. She was also expected to support other teaching and learning initiatives in the school such as Te Kotahitanga, literacy and numeracy, upskill herself through professional reading and research, and attend cluster meetings.

The activities and impact of the SCT

The SCT reported that she worked mainly with PRTs although some more experienced teachers did ask for help with 'one-off' problems. This support was provided in brief and very directed sessions. In such instances, the SCT saw her role as supporting teachers to develop their own solutions. One example she gave was looking at the levels of motivation in some year 9 and 10 classes. She did

some observations and gave the teachers some feedback including student comments and written records of the observations.

She had found it difficult at times as self-referrals were not common. A link with an external initiative had been useful in promoting classroom observations and her role. However, she felt that the existence of other professional development initiatives in the school meant that many teachers did feel they had sufficient support and did not need to ask for any further help. Some of the requests for help from experienced teachers came through the appraisal process during which it was recommended to teachers they worked with the SCT.

As part of her role this SCT met with PRTs individually once a week for an hour. She provided a range of support to the PRTs including things such as showing them around the school and ensuring they understood what being on duty involved through to observing classroom teaching. She felt her role was really to provide any support that gave teachers confidence and increased their knowledge.

With one of the PRTs the SCT had worked on acceptable noise levels in the class. This focus had been decided in consultation with the PRT. The SCT provided a range of management strategies aimed at keeping the noise down at the start of a lesson. After the initial focus, the SCT had maintained ongoing support on an informal basis. The PRT felt there had been a change in her classes as a result. She was very grateful for the support, knowing that senior management had been aware of her difficulties with classroom management. The PRT felt that the SCT had been working alongside her and that the control had been left with the PRT.

Another PRT had taught in two schools in 2006 and so had worked with two SCTs. He noted that the SCT was very important in helping a new teacher settle into a school. Both SCTs had provided him with similar support such as classroom management, ideas for teaching and learning and structuring their work. They provided what he saw as the things new teachers did not get from other experienced teachers who he thought had possibly forgotten what it was like to be a beginning teacher. These included a range of solutions for different situations, generic teaching strategies and ways to approach teaching. A really big part of the SCT role, he felt, was providing emotional support. In his first two terms he had felt like resigning but the SCT had talked him through it and had organised for him to observe other teachers.

The third PRT interviewed at this school was full of praise for the SCT who taught in the same department as him. This meant a broader level of support was possible from the SCT around content specific knowledge and the SCT had provided a range of resources and teaching ideas. She would work through units with him providing ideas for how to teach concepts.

Reporting and accountability processes

The SCT provided the board with a report every two months in the form of a summary of activities undertaken with all names removed. She also kept a weekly log. It was important to her that she was accountable for both the money and time allowance she had been given and that she was seen to be

doing the job properly. Her key success criteria were that the PRTs had made progress, and that her own knowledge had increased through working with other teachers.

Intended changes to the role and job description for 2007

For 2007 the SCT hoped to focus on professional reading and research. She wanted to work in a more focused manner and to present specific material to the staff as part of their professional learning.

The value and status of the role

The SCT was part of the management team and attended meetings which enabled her to keep up to date with other things in the school. Despite this, it was still felt by the senior management team that the role needed more status to reflect how important it was. It was also suggested that a lack of formal status meant the SCT was not as confident as she could have been.

This SCT felt the role, unlike HoDs and deans, would always need to be flexible to meet the changing needs of the school. While this was important it had also made the role difficult for her and she had initially struggled with the lack of clear structure and specific tasks as well as the difficulty of explaining it to others.

It was commented on, by senior management, that the real value of the role lay in the work with PRTs where the greatest differences could be made by allowing beginning teachers to learn from experienced teachers. For one of the PRTs, at least, the SCT role was valuable because it provided beginning teachers with individual one to one time whereas the PRT coordinator tended to work with them as a group.

> Pokaka school

School culture and context

The principal and other teachers had suggested a particular teacher would be good in the role of SCT. This teacher had taught at the school for 30 years and was well-known and respected. She had also been an HoD for 15 of those years. It was suggested by one teacher that this SCT had always been the type of senior teacher who would approach newer staff members and find out how they were getting on, offer them resources or give them additional ideas. For instance, she had provided other teachers in her department with four pages of report comments to use as examples in 2005. Becoming an SCT was, therefore, an extension of an informal support role she was already providing to many teachers.

The large size and diversity of this school appears to have had an effect on both teachers' perceptions of the role and on the ability of the SCT to perform the role in 2006. The very large staff, as with Miro, made it difficult for the SCT role to be highly visible or for her to be able to work with a significant proportion of the staff.

In addition to the size of the staff its ethnic diversity was also seen as a factor impacting on the role. It was felt that teachers from some cultural backgrounds were far less likely to self-refer than others as the SCT was more likely to be viewed as an authority role. It was also felt that there were additional classroom management issues for teachers from overseas where teaching methods were different to those in New Zealand. This was an area the SCT was trying to learn more about so she could help such teachers understand and discover there were other solutions whether from their own country or another.

This school is in an area which has a high staff turnover and this may also have impacted on the SCT role. Indeed, at the time of interviews one HoD had just left and at least one major department had a new HoD who was also new to New Zealand. The SCT spoke of needing to keep experienced teachers at the school and to utilise their expertise.

This SCT had a close personal mentor and friend, an educational researcher, and she explained how she always rang this person to discuss anything she was thinking of presenting to the staff. She felt a mentor was important for all SCTs and preferably someone from outside the school to ensure the mentor was able to provide objective and dispassionate advice.

The activities and impact of the SCT

For this SCT there was an 'overwhelming' number of teachers to work with either informally or formally due to the size of the school. Much of this work appeared to have been informal in 2006 such as chats in the staffroom and sharing resources and reading materials but the SCT had also undertaken more formal work, particularly with PRTs. She made sure she was always in the staffroom at breaks so that she was available and accessible to teachers. She saw her role as working with several groups of teachers: PRTs, HoDs, teachers close to retirement and those in the middle who needed access to new resources and ideas.

Only PRTs were interviewed during the case study and as a result there is a clearer indication of the types of activities undertaken by the SCT when working with these teachers than the others. At the start of the year she ran a session with the PRTs introducing herself and outlining her role. The SCT also attended some of the PRT meetings run by the PRT co-ordinator. There was a PRT co-ordinator in the school from within the senior management team and the PRTs did see the two roles as different.

One of the first year teachers spoke of how the SCT had helped her with her classroom management. The SCT had observed her working with a low band year 10 science class and provided some quick feedback. This was prior to a formal appraisal, by her HoD, which was to occur with the same class. The SCT also worked with a senior class demonstrating management skills. Since then the SCT had checked up informally and made it clear she was always there to help. The PRT felt that while she would speak to colleagues in her department first there was real value in someone like the SCT who had 30 years teaching experience and was always willing to share resources, ideas and expertise. The one barrier for her was physical access to the SCT in that the main staffroom, where she usually met

the SCT, was a long way from where she taught and colleagues within her department were more immediately available to her.

The SCT had helped another first year teacher prioritise what was really important and to cope with the daily tasks of being a teacher, such as keeping a roll book or making the most of your non-contact time. In addition, the SCT had observed one of her classes and provided some feedback on classroom management. In this instance the SCT focused on how the students were interacting with each other. The support provided was generic as this teacher also felt she would always go to her department colleagues first. This ability to focus on more generic things rather than content or subject specific concerns was seen as very useful. In addition, this young teacher felt the SCT provided the kind of information and advice you did not get at teachers' college about how to survive being a teacher, and how to manage your time. The SCT had also been particularly useful as there was a new HoD in her department, who was new to New Zealand. The knowledge of the culture, processes and procedures the SCT had of the school was therefore doubly invaluable. The two most useful things she felt she had learned from the SCT, as a young teacher, was to make a commitment to personal time and to always look ahead and be ready for any imminent deadlines such as reports.

Another PRT, also a first-year teacher, spoke of how the SCT had come and observed her teach prior to appraisal as a practice observation. They talked about the lesson afterwards and how it had gone. In addition, the PRT spoke of 'catching up' with the SCT regularly and just talking about the problems and issue of being a beginning teacher such as classroom management and school procedures. There was again a sense that this was a role that could be undertaken by someone in the department but the SCT was available and approachable so she was used.

The SCT explained how a number of HoDs had approached her for assistance. The SCT felt this was because there was no-one for HoDs to talk to in the school when they just wanted a solution to an immediate problem. To talk to senior management, the next layer, could be seen as 'admitting failure' by HoDs. She saw her role as guiding them to a solution not providing any direct answers.

In addition to the HoDs the SCT had also supported teachers at the end of their careers to make decisions about their immediate futures. One such teacher was considering early retirement as the department was about to lose their HoD, a role this teacher did not want. The SCT suggested she took a part-time role rather than leave teaching completely. In this sense the role was seen as very much a guidance counsellor one supporting teachers to make largely personal decisions about their career. The SCT felt it was important that older teachers were supported and that their expertise was not lost to the school.

A number of teachers had also approached her for material on a range of topics including co-operative learning, scaffolding and differentiated learning. She passed material onto them, if she had it, or would find it if she did not. This material was put into the teacher's pigeon hole rather than discussed as the SCT felt most teachers just needed access to new ideas. In some ways she saw herself as a mobile library service.

The value and status of the role

For this SCT the role was definitely something different and sat to one side of the traditional school structures. In this way she saw it as having an influence on many parts of the school but not being controlled by them. She clearly differentiated between both her role and that of HoDs and PRT coordinators. In both instances she saw the roles as complementary but separate. She felt the SCT role was more emotional and collegial than other management roles. She also felt it was more than a master teacher role including aspects of “mother hen, father confessor and fashion advisor”. She felt that it would take at least a year for her to be sure of what the role really was and to develop an instinctive understanding of what an SCT should be doing.

The SCT did not feel the role was an officially recognised position and as such there was no office provided although she could access one when needed. She felt she needed a space rather like the guidance counsellor had. This needed to be away from both management and guidance teams to ensure the appearance of neutrality.

One of the PRTs interviewed expressed a sense of confusion over what the role and position of the SCT was. She felt it had not been well explained and although she was happy to use the support offered, she was not too clear why it was being offered.

For one of the senior management in the school, the role was seen as equivalent to being a dean. It was not seen as equivalent to an HoD who had responsibilities for a department. It was felt that the role would need to be combined with either dean or HoD experience to be sufficient for an SCT to become a senior manager. This person saw the role as a luxury rather than a necessity. It was felt the size of the school had made it hard for the SCT role to be visible and that appointing more SCTs would share the load. The feeling was that the role needed to be more specialised.

> Puka school

School culture and context

The implementation of the SCT scheme at this school varied markedly from all others visited. This is a large school and there was concern that the role could become too diluted without a clear structure. The principal had decided that those teachers the SCT would work with were the ones who would gain the most from being in the programme. They were not PRTs as the programme run by the deputy principal for PRTs was comprehensive and successful. Rather, they were teachers who had been teaching for three or four years and who the principal felt were already quite effective but could become even more effective over time and would do so more rapidly with a mentor.

Initial selections were made to ensure there were two teachers per subject area so that they could work in pairs. However, it appeared at the time of the visit, that most were working individually. One of the teachers commented that they had not worked as a group and that they felt there would be no benefit in team meetings. This was not a universal opinion, however, as another teacher thought it

would have been really valuable to work as a whole group on occasion, and to work as a professional group who shared experiences and ideas.

The selected teachers were invited to join the SCT programme by a letter from the principal and, at least initially, there appeared to have been some concern. One of those interviewed spoke of how it taken a while for her to accept and then she had accepted out of interest. Only one of those teachers invited to participate withdrew from the programme. The SCT worked hard to convince them that they were a 'special team' and it was about making good teachers more effective, not trying to change the practice of ineffective teachers.

During an informal brunch with all the team members the diversity of the group and the very different attitudes they had to being part of the programme was strongly apparent. While some were very supportive others still seemed to harbour some concerns over their involvement.

The activities and impact of the SCT

Each member of the team had one period a week dedicated to their SCT programme or project. The SCT supported them by completing classroom observations and modelling lessons. She team taught with some of the teachers and acted as a 'sounding board' as well as providing tips around teaching and learning. Each of the teachers had a self-assessment checklist. In addition, the SCT had been very proactive and approached HoDs and others to offer her services outside the 'special team'.

One of the teachers interviewed spoke of how successful involvement in the programme had been for him. He had enjoyed the flexible time it provided and the opportunity to do some professional reading which he could incorporate into his classroom teaching. He spoke of how he had seen a decrease in the number of demerit points for one of the classes he taught and how student achievement had improved. As with the other members of 'the team' he reported to the SCT formally once a term although he did comment on her proactivity and the way in which she 'checked up' in a positive and informal manner.

Being in 'the team' was an equally positive experience for another teacher. It had given her time to work on her own professional practice and on meeting school and department goals. Being part of the SCT programme she felt had pushed her to develop her teaching further. This teacher taught four foundation classes and one extension class. She had spent some of her SCT time with the technician learning how to use MS PowerPoint and animated GIFs and felt at the time of the interview that she was confident in using ICT. As a result of the extra time spent on her ICT skills she created resources for the department as well as integrating ICT more in her lessons. While she felt she would have upskilled herself anyway and achieved many of the same outcomes she valued the time and support being in 'the team' had provided and felt it had been much easier to achieve her goals. Working with the SCT had motivated her to plan her time and helped her overcome her fear of ICT. It had given her both time and confidence. One of the outcomes was that she had trialled a new unit of work called 'medieval madness' with her classes as a result of her ICT work. The SCT had been very much part of the delivery of the unit and had been in and out of the class as it was taught.

The third teacher from 'the team' interviewed explained how working in the SCT programme had raised her self-confidence and she was prepared to take risks in her teaching as a result. There were things she had wanted to try in the past but had been uncertain about through a fear of failure. With the encouragement of the SCT she tried some of these ideas out successfully. For example, her facilitation of group work improved and she began to use expert groups in her classroom. She was also focusing on differentiation. For her the SCT had been a 'sounding board' – someone from outside the department who had an interesting perspective and who was focused on teaching practice not content. On a more personal note, she spoke of how the SCT was from a non-palangi culture and was somewhat of a role model and mentor for her. However, she did feel she would have found someone to talk to if the SCT had not been appointed.

Intended changes to the role and job description for 2007

The principal suggested that given the success of the programme in 2006 they would consider appointing a second person in a similar role. One idea was that there could be two phases where teachers could work with different mentors or in different programmes. Another option was a two-year cycle with one person. However, nothing had been discussed in detail and consideration was being given to a number of options for 2007.

> Rata school

School culture and context

Rata is a smaller school in a rural area with a collegial staff who know each other really well and interact out of school hours. This made it easier for the SCT to communicate with teachers on an informal basis. The SCT had been at the school for 13 years and had a reputation for being effective in classroom management. Prior to taking on the SCT position she had been HoD social studies and had undertaken some informal observations and support work. She was well-known and respected amongst the staff. She commented, however, that her relationship with the staff was changing as a result of her new role.

The SCT felt that two-thirds of the staff were open to new ideas but that there were also five or six teachers in the school (approximately twenty-five percent of the staff) who would not make their classroom open to her in her SCT role. However, she had had only had one really negative experience with a teacher who viewed her as a 'super teach'.

For the school there were some issues around the SCT role. Given the small size of the staff finding a replacement HoD had not been easy. Also staffing was stretched to provide the time allowance for the SCT role. While she had put her role as HoD on hold to take up the SCT position, the SCT commented that she was still doing much of the HoD work. She was still leading junior social studies as the new HoD was not sufficiently experienced at this level. She had organised much of the departmental work before taking up the SCT role to support the new HoD.

The SCT job description

The SCT reported directly to the principal. The purpose of her role, as outlined in the job description was to support teachers to enhance student learning. The tasks were:

- to support and mentor beginning teachers
- to observe class lessons taken by beginning teachers
- to coordinate class visits for beginning teachers
- to have follow-up meetings with beginning teachers
- to support and mentor staff who seek or require assistance
- to observe teaching practice through classroom visits
- to follow up with meetings and provide ongoing assistance
- to assist with the facilitation of a professional reading group in conjunction with the principal
- to organise ongoing professional learning for beginning teachers
- to attend local SCT cluster meetings and any other professional learning opportunities during 2006 that will support the work of the SCT
- to review the SCT pilot scheme at the end of 2006 as per ministerial guidelines.

The activities and impact of the SCT

To ensure all staff were aware of her role and availability the SCT made a brief presentation at a staff meeting. They were also given a copy of her job description and the SCT placed a timetable indicating her availability in the staffroom. She met with all new teachers to the school during the teacher-only day at the beginning of the year. This was followed up by a visit to each teacher's classroom to initiate contact.

Much of her work, as with many of the other schools, was informal and with beginning teachers. In most instances her work was centred on behaviour management issues and involved classroom observations, modelling of ideas or suggestions and verbal debrief sessions. She often tried out new ideas in her own classroom first before sharing them with others.

The SCT recorded observations when visiting a teacher's class, which she then used as the basis for subsequent discussion. The written notes were used to identify both effective classroom practice and areas that needed more development. The SCT then worked with the teacher to make suggestions for changes in classroom practice. Generally she revisited the teacher to confirm and/or modify any changes made. Due to the confidentiality requirement she did not keep any of the observations but gave them to the teacher concerned.

The SCT commented that there were three teachers she would have liked to have been more proactive with and to have helped them with management issues if they had allowed her to. She

attended a meeting with one of these teachers and the deputy principal as a support person, and this had been a positive experience.

In addition to her work with individual teachers the SCT developed a professional reading area in the staffroom and facilitated professional learning sessions at two staff meetings. At the principal's request she had focused on a particular class. This was seen as one way of opening a closed door and providing support where it was needed.

For this SCT, as with others, time was an issue in terms of completing professional readings and reflection. She tried to complete at least two hours professional reading a week. Reflection tended to be informal, but frequent, with colleagues. In addition, there was at least one formal reflection session with the principal each term.

Two PRTs who were interviewed spoke of how valuable the SCT had been to them in terms of what they called 'practical stuff'. This included the development of resources and simple classroom management strategies. Both had observed how well the SCT managed her classes and they trusted her professional judgement. They also found her knowledge of how the school worked, and of the other staff and the students useful. She knew the community well and provided background information on the students which helped the PRTs.

Another young teacher had worked extensively with the SCT. This teacher had responsibility for the year 7/8 programme in her department and also had a difficult year 9/10 class. The SCT worked in the same workspace as the teacher which had made it easy to offer and accept support. The support provided included ideas for classroom activities and for managing the class as well as support with specific students.

The SCT provided a list of the roles she had undertaken since the establishment of the SCT position at the beginning of 2006. These were:

- modelling lessons on aspects of 'best practice'
- working with PRTs – observations, analysis of questioning techniques, keeping students on task and helping with management techniques
- helping teachers with lesson planning and time management techniques
- observing other teachers' lessons in a supportive role when they have self-referred
- focusing on a particular class in order to identify management techniques most successful with this specific group and sharing findings with all relevant teachers
- providing written observations of teachers' lessons when requested by them
- purchasing a number of appropriate publications for a professional reading resource section in the staffroom
- accessing a wide variety of professional readings and educational publications
- stimulating professional discussion in staff meetings and questioning of established practices

- locating a wide variety of resources for individual teachers to use in their lessons as requested
- locating resources for HoDs and management staff to support their roles within departments
- creating resources for teachers to use as requested.
- making herself available to new teachers at the school on a regular basis to provide opportunities to discuss any issue which may arise.

Intended changes to the role and job description for 2007

For 2007 this SCT wanted to encourage more experienced teachers to work with her. She also wanted to increase the professional development opportunities within staff meetings.

The value and status of the role

The SCT felt it was important that the role remained outside the management hierarchy and was not connected to appraisal or competency. As with other SCTs, she had not wanted a management position and one of the attractions of this role was that she could remain in the classroom and have a leadership role without becoming part of management. However, she did feel she was being used as an extra management person at times particularly if the senior management were away or busy.

One of the senior managers commented that the role should be rewarded at the equivalent to three management units because it carried significant responsibility and could potentially do real harm or damage if it was executed poorly.

> Rimu school

School culture and context

Only the SCT was interviewed for this case study although detailed documentation was provided. As a result there is not a clear picture of what was happening in this school or of the context in which the pilot was being implemented. The job, in 2006, was closely linked to the SCT's role as the reading teacher and literacy coordinator, and this does appear to have given her some entrée into classes as she had a known profile.

Comments from the SCT suggested that a number of staff she believed needed support were unlikely to invite her to work with them and that they were actively resistant to changing their practice. She had had 'flat refusals' from some teachers when she had tried to 'nudge' her way into their classrooms through her literacy role. Others, though, had spoken highly of her work and the support she was giving them.

The SCT job description

A copy of the job description was provided. This clearly outlined that the goal of the SCT pilot was to enhance teaching and learning in the classrooms in accordance with the strategic plan of the school. Five key tasks were outlined to achieve this goal. These were:

- to provide support for teachers who ask for specific help to implement their goals in classroom teaching
- to provide support for the PRT coordinator and the PRTs when asked
- to keep up-to-date with research on best teaching practice by regular professional reading and show this by a journal of reading
- to attend whatever training is offered the SCT by the Ministry of Education
- to contribute to the organisation and presentation of professional learning in the school
- to role model best practice.

The activities and impact of the SCT

As with many other SCTs most of her work appeared to have been informal. The SCT commented that she was constantly assailed by teachers looking for advice or guidance and that she found it difficult to see what she had achieved. As a result, she felt a sense of guilt and concern over whether the role was having an effect and whether she was meeting her responsibilities.

Outside of this informal work, a large part of her role had been the coordination and delivery of a regular programme of professional learning for the whole staff. In addition, she had modelled literacy strategies for teachers which she believed had been successful. The SCT had kept a log of her activities, a copy of which was provided to the researcher. Regular activities throughout the log included:

- *Conducting regular professional learning sessions with the whole staff.* Topics delivered included using asTTle, inferential questioning and revisiting the expectations of students. For some sessions she had coordinated guest speakers and invited other staff to present.
- *Working with individual teachers primarily focused on teaching literacy across the curriculum.* This included meetings, classroom observations and modelling teaching strategies as well as lesson planning. These were mainly PRTs.
- *Facilitating regular PRT meetings.* At these she presented material such as literacy strategies on documentation and using literacy strategies and activities.

The log showed that the SCT had worked with at least 13 individual teachers in 2006. The number of sessions with each ranged from one to eight and these occurred over the year or in short, intense bursts. All sessions appeared to have focused on literacy. The teachers came from a diverse range of subject areas including physics, art and English.

Intended changes to the role and job description for 2007

For 2007 the SCT wanted to set up a reading group around a specific text related to teaching strategies. She also intended to be more assertive with PRTs and other teachers new to the school.

> Titoki school

School culture and context

This was a very old school with a strong culture and a hierarchical management structure.

From the interviews with key personnel there was a strong sense that the school wanted the SCT role to succeed and that they had worked hard to meet the requirements and expectations laid out at the initial training and in the handbook. In fact this was perhaps the school where these had been followed most closely, and this may have limited the SCT role in some ways.

However, more teachers were interviewed in this school than in others and there was a wider range in terms of experience and issues dealt with. This SCT appeared to have been successful in getting experienced teachers to come to her and while a lot of her work was with PRTs, she had also undertaken substantial work with others. This SCT appears to have had a positive impact on the school culture, with more than one teacher commenting that the culture was now more open and a more collegial model was developing in the school. This included a willingness to allow the SCT to visit other classes.

As with some of the other SCTs, part of the discussions was around 'where to next' for her and the role. She certainly felt more could be done with the role than was currently happening.

There were three or four applicants for the position.

The SCT job description

A copy of the job description was supplied to the researcher. The job description was derived from the Ministry of Education training material. The SCT was responsible to the assistant principal (staff) and the purpose of the role was described as working to support teachers in their classroom practice. The programme was described as a teacher mentor programme which was 'confidential' and not to be used for or as part of any competency or attestation processes within the school.

The assistant principal from this school attended the first training sessions for the SCT, who was not available at the time. As a result it was felt that the job description was very close to the generic guidelines published and clearer boundaries and definitions had been set around the role than at some other schools.

The key tasks were listed as to:

- maintain a confidential record of interaction with staff

- mentor year 1 and 2 teachers
- mentor experienced teachers who seek assistance
- meet once a timetable cycle with the assistant principal
- attend professional learning provided for the SCT scheme.

The activities and impact of the SCT

In line with the job description the SCT had undertaken significant amounts of work with year 1 and 2 teachers. This work was planned for the year ahead and was very structured. She met with them once or twice a week and undertook lesson observations providing feedback based around learning practice and classroom management. She also worked with seven more experienced teachers on a formal basis. In addition, there had been the casual and 'opportunistic' interactions mentioned by all SCTs where teachers informally approach the SCT for advice or ideas.

Amongst the experienced teachers, one just wanted to talk through some things he had done while another felt he might as well make use of the resource on offer. Four of them approached her as they wanted to try something new in their teaching such as using the computers or the intranet more. Of these teachers two were from the same department as the SCT. All teachers she had worked with self-referred and none of the requests were related to competency. In this way it was felt the SCT and the school had ensured the integrity of the role was intact.

The SCT reported that a lot of her time had been spent in and out of lessons. Some team teaching was undertaken and she taught the classes of other teachers so they could observe how she would work with their classes. In this way the teachers could provide her with feedback on what they had seen. To enable this large amount of in-class support the assistant principal relieved for both the SCT and other teachers. In addition, the SCT relieved for teachers so they could observe others.

One of the activities she undertook was working on curriculum documents for other departments and helping them to link the statements in these documents back to the lessons they were teaching. Another activity was providing feedback to the teachers of a group of year 10 students who were achieving below expectations.

Her work with one of the young teachers was a mix of guidance counsellor and professional mentor. The young teacher believed that the SCT had helped her 'find her place' in the school and had 'made challenges bearable' and that without the SCT she would not still be teaching. This support was provided in a way that made her feel like she had done it herself. The young teacher talked about how she felt safe with the SCT and that she could trust her. For this teacher the demarcation between the SCT and management was important. The SCT and this teacher met once or twice a week and the SCT attended her classes to observe and provide feedback. In addition, the teacher observed the SCT teaching. The SCT also provided her with strategies for classroom management such having pre-prepared 'to do now' work on a portable whiteboard which she could use in any classroom. (The PRT

did not have her own permanent classroom). As a result she had reported 'incredible change' in her teaching and said she intended to remain in teaching.

Another teacher spoken with taught a supported learning class of 12 boys in year 10 who were disengaged from learning. This was in a home room situation where she taught them maths, English and science. This teacher was primary trained and very experienced (she had been a principal). However, science was not an area of expertise, particularly at secondary level. The teacher had not gone into the laboratory for the last four years with this class or its equivalent as she did not feel confident to do so. She now shared the teaching of the class with the SCT who took them for one timetabled period in the science laboratory. Sharing the role was the SCT's idea after a personal conversation with the teacher. This was made possible as the SCT already had one small year 10 class to teach and the two classes could be combined for this period. As a result the SCT had demonstrated good practice and they had brainstormed ideas together developing strategies and resources.

Another teacher commented how she had found the SCT invaluable and wished such a resource had been available when she first started teaching. One of the key benefits she saw from the role was that there had been a culture shift in the school meaning it was now more acceptable to observe other teachers. She also felt there was a lot more openness and sharing among the staff than there had been previously. For this teacher the SCT role had validated much of this shift in practice. The teacher had asked the SCT to arrange observations of other teachers such as the teacher's HoD so that she could get a sense of how she was doing her job. While this was something she had wanted to do for a while she may not have found the time to do so without the support of the SCT.

Another teacher had approached the SCT to help him with his lesson planning and linking this to the curriculum. She helped him work with a formal template and keeping things organised. Once she had got the process underway he continued to work on his own. In addition, he had a smart board in his room and he intended to learn how to use it with the SCT.

The final teacher spoken to had gone to the SCT as a result of a boys' education conference she had attended. She wanted the SCT to observe her teaching and provide feedback on how she responded to the boys and developed relationships with them. She also intended to ask the SCT to administer surveys to the students as part of the appraisal process.

Reporting and accountability processes

The SCT reported to the assistant principal. During the first two terms of the year they had had a timetabled meeting once a cycle. In the third term this had not been as regular. She was also required to write a report at the end of the year and to keep records of her activities.

Intended changes to the role and job description for 2007

There was some concern for 2007 as the SCT was needed to take on an acting management role within her department due to the HoD taking leave. The school felt she could manage both but there

was concern over the requirement that the SCT did not hold a management role. Again, as with the other schools, the issue appeared to be limited resources in terms of experienced, competent teachers for both management roles and the SCT role.

The value and status of the role

A senior manager saw the role as one that sits to one side of the traditional hierarchy. He felt that this was appropriate and that the role was not one that involved any decision making. He felt it was important there was no authority attached to the role as that would make it a management position. For him the role was one where the SCT could share ideas with senior management and be part of the professional learning committee. One of the teachers interviewed also felt the role should not be a management one but was important enough to sit alongside the senior team. For an HoD the SCT role was non-threatening because it was not part of management and this made it easier to ask for support from the SCT. For this HoD, the SCT was someone she could direct teachers from her department to for help, removing the need for her to be involved in her role as an appraiser. She felt it was important the role had autonomy and integrity – like a guidance counsellor – and also that it needed to have a low profile in the school to enable experienced teachers to approach the SCT without losing credibility amongst other staff.

> Toru school

School culture and context

As with a number of other SCTs this one had undertaken a range of support and advisory tasks informally prior to the SCT role becoming available. She had held management positions in the past and had been a teacher for 17 years but had wanted to find another way of exercising leadership in the school. The SCT role was, therefore, a perfect opportunity for her.

The school did not have many PRTs but did have a number of staff who were new to the school. A key role for the SCT was the support of these teachers. The SCT reported that she had had a lot of positive feedback from various HoF as a result of her work with these teachers which suggested a supportive school culture.

ERO visited the school during 2006, which the SCT reported had jolted some teachers into requesting assistance. These requests had been ongoing and had focused on deep issues. ERO highlighted the need for the school to work on literacy and one of the senior management had been given the role of leading a new literacy programme. This was something the SCT had been keen to become involved in and she had asked the senior manager if she could be a member of the literacy project meetings.

There were no schoolwide professional learning initiatives in the school. The professional learning budget was devolved to the faculties and as a result schoolwide sharing was not common. One of the SCT's main goals at the outset of 2006 was to capitalise on the expertise of the teachers in the school and to make sharing effective teaching practice available to those who would like to make use of it. As

a result she had tried to facilitate classroom observations of teachers with specific strengths such as managing low band classes. This had not always been successful and she felt it would have been better to determine a specific and formal time rather than share an open invitation to all teachers.

The SCT job description

This SCT had a very detailed job description, which was based on five key areas of activity: working with teachers; management; review and evaluation; professional practice and relationships. For each of these areas there were a number of key tasks as outlined below. A range of performance indicators were also given for each area.

- Work with teachers
 - Work alongside year 1 and 2 teachers as a mentor/coach to enable them to be the best they can be.
 - Work alongside experienced teachers, as requested by those teachers, as a mentor/coach to enable them to identify and achieve goals – in a role to enhance not evaluate performance.
 - Present whole staff with cross-curricular developments in teaching and learning practice and research to support the development of a professional learning community and to build enthusiasm and energy for the profession.
- Management
 - Educate whole staff on the role of the SCT and the support available.
 - Manage systems to deal with requests.
 - Develop tools to support teaching and learning processes, observation and feedback.
 - Contribute to the overall staff professional learning programme.
- Review and evaluation
 - Review progress with year 1 and 2 teachers each term.
 - Review own practice and reflect on how practices as teacher and as SCT might be enhanced.
 - Produce reports as required for the pilot.
- Professional practice
 - Teach classes as timetabled.
 - Model ongoing professional learning in the classroom and at both departmental and school meetings.
- Relationships
 - Develop productive relationships with: PRT coordinator, principal, other SCTs, an external mentor.

The activities and impact of the SCT

In May 2006 the SCT addressed the whole staff to introduce her new role. During this address she outlined what had been covered in the national SCT conference (April 2006) and what her goals were. She described her main goal as working alongside teachers to improve learning outcomes across the

school. She also discussed how one of her key hopes was that all staff would allow others to observe their lessons.

The SCT had been involved in the induction of all teachers new to the school at the beginning of 2006. As a result she established a working relationship with them. She had set up a regular meeting time with all but two of these teachers. The timetables of these two teachers did not allow this to happen. At these meetings discussions ranged from timetabling issues, room availability, using computer systems for attendance and reports to classroom management, discipline, classroom environment and whānau management. The SCT also observed lessons by all new teachers to the school regardless of their levels of prior experience. This had been a highlight for her. She provided feedback on all observations. Where appropriate she also undertook follow up observation and feedback sessions. All but one of the new teachers came back for follow up work during the year.

One of these teachers had needed help with planning which was highlighted during the ERO visit. It was suggested he work with the SCT and the teacher concerned had found her support really valuable. In fact he commented that he would probably not have still been at the school without this support. Some confidentiality issues had arisen as the assistant principal was involved from a formal appraisal view. The need for the SCT to be able to work alongside the more formal systems had been clearly highlighted for this SCT by this experience.

The year one teacher the SCT worked with was an options teacher and as such had different classes every term. This had been a real struggle in terms of classroom management and developing systems. The SCT and this teacher met every week and just talked about the things that were happening. This was very valuable to the young teacher who appreciated the really good ideas and the positive feedback she received. She felt the PRT coordinator was too busy to provide this kind of individual support and she did not want to bother her HoD. The SCT was someone who had the time. Another area the SCT had helped her with was writing year 13 testimonials and reports.

With the PRTs she was working with the SCT facilitated group sharing and solving of problems. She was careful not to intrude on the work of the PRT coordinator. With a first year teacher she also undertook observations and provided feedback.

One of the teachers new to the school, who was interviewed, spoke of how helpful the SCT had been. For this teacher coming to a new school had been like starting all over again. She did not have an allocated classroom and so was always moving around. This had made things even more difficult and the SCT had arranged some practical solutions such as finding the teacher some storage space and advocating for her. The SCT had become a 'go-to' person who could answer most of her questions and who knew how things worked in the school.

In addition, she had been very proactive in making suggestions to senior management and others about changes to school processes, which she felt would enhance teaching and learning. The very proactive approach of this SCT meant she had a high profile in the school.

One such suggestion had been reviewing the way in which technology and other options classes were formed to ensure there were not some classes with large numbers of disruptive students. She had

also suggested that a new planning book be trialled for 2007. This was agreed to and the planning book included a range of teaching and learning strategies alongside the more traditional units and lesson planning pages and as such would provide teachers with continuous prompts and suggestions.

The SCT was involved in the numeracy project for years 7 and 8 (which was her teaching area) and she was also involved with a literacy taskforce. These projects gave her an opportunity to develop relationships with a number of HoFs.