

# Randstad Education UK's Patrick Maloney explains Audit Commission findings on schools budgets.

Submitted by: Friday's Media Group

Tuesday, 5 April 2011

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The latest Audit Commission Report is 'very surprised' by spiraling expenditure on teaching assistants and calls upon school leaders to make big cuts in the £2bn 'TA' spend.

Says Randstad Education managing director Patrick Maloney: "Spending on teaching assistants has more than doubled in less than 10 years to £2.2bn a year, making up a quarter of the primary school workforce."

Patrick Maloney explains: "Children deserve to have fully qualified supply teachers on hand, checked and vetted, ready to provide temporary cover when needed. This is cost-effective and efficient. But in a misguided attempt to cut back on supply teachers many schools decided to employ an army of unqualified teaching assistants sitting on the fixed cost payroll, leading to predictable inefficiencies, obvious damage to pupils' education, and is also economic madness."

Explaining in more detail why UK schools came to spend £2.2bn a year on teaching assistants instead of teachers, Mr Maloney adds: "There are around 445,000 teachers. What used to happen is that when a teacher went sick the school rang one of the 100+ specialist agencies in the UK and a fully checked subject-specialist supply teacher filled the place. Now, as the Audit Commission points out, huge numbers of full-time cover supervisors and assistants have been recruited – presumably in an ill-thought-out attempt to save using supply teachers. Of course, the Audit Commission has revealed that employing more people before teachers get sick can never be as efficient as calling a supply teacher only when required. That initial group of teaching assistants and cover supervisors has now grown to more than 500,000 – yes more than the number of teachers! And it's now clearly out of control. Cover supervisors – unlike supply teachers - aren't qualified teachers. So they can't actually work as a supply teacher and they struggle to cope when a teacher goes off sick. Hence the cover supervisors are now going sick so when the teachers go sick there's no cover supervisor. So after all that expense, the school still has to pay for a supply teacher!"

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## About Randstad Education

Randstad Education is a specialist division of Randstad, the world's second-largest staffing services group. It is the leading UK and global educational staffing specialist, providing quality, individual service to over 10,000 teachers and support staff and to the 15,000 schools who have used its service throughout the UK. Randstad Education teachers, assistants and lecturers work alongside 135,000 young people per day across 2,500 schools a week, positively shaping their lives at nurseries, schools, colleges and training organisations across the UK.

Established in 1993, Randstad Education, the new name for Select Education, has a network of over 30 offices throughout the UK with teams of education specialists, including dedicated primary, secondary, special needs, early years and further education consultants.

Working closely with the Department for Education (DfE), Home Office and other government bodies, it also partners on ground-breaking education research with the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) and Campaign for Learning. As a result the company has pioneered many aspects of educational staffing, from quality controls and systems through to introducing new services for SEN and teaching assistants.

Randstad Education Limited is an accredited Investor in People (IIP) organisation, a member of the REC (Recruitment and Employment Confederation) and is accredited with the Government's Quality Mark and the international quality standard BS EN ISO 9002.

Visit [www.randstadeducation.co.uk](http://www.randstadeducation.co.uk) for more information.

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