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# Flexible Working Programme



**FLEXIBLE  
WORKING  
AMBASSADOR  
MATS AND  
SCHOOLS**

**A testament to implementing  
flexible working across a special  
school setting**

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Inspiring Futures

# A testament to implementing flexible working across a special school setting

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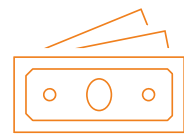


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The Grove, a special school for autistic pupils aged 5-19 in Tottenham, London, and part of the SEARCH Education Trust, has been at the forefront of implementing flexible working practices within the special school sector. Under the visionary leadership of the headteacher, Lucia Santi, the school has embarked on an innovative journey to enhance staff retention and recruitment amidst a challenging teacher crisis.

## Challenges faced

This initiative is especially important considering that many support staff are working on relatively low incomes. Addressing the dual challenges of supporting staff workload and wellbeing, while also tackling recruitment and retention issues, has been crucial.



## The approach



Firstly, by introducing the option for teachers to complete their Planning, Preparation, and Assessment (PPA) time at home, the school has offered a choice for teachers to work half a day weekly or one day fortnightly. Additionally, the programme includes negotiating PPA time within part-time work and creatively adjusting timetables, for instance, extending a 0.6 working pattern to 0.7, where PPA is completed at home rather than within the 0.6 contact time. Opportunities for support staff through an aspiring teacher programme has provided capacity for this initiative whilst also creating supported routes towards teacher training programmes.

## Outcomes and benefits

Teachers have reported a significant improvement in their work-life balance, enjoying the flexibility of home working. They appreciate being offsite during PPA time, which allows them to avoid being pulled into school-based activities. This flexibility has empowered staff to manage their time more effectively, enabling them to engage in personal activities during PPA time and have greater control over their schedules. Support staff feel valued because of the professional development routes available to those who want to move onto teaching training programmes.



## Future plans

The Grove's commitment to flexible working is not just a strategy for the present but a vision for the future. The school aims to actively promote flexible working as part of its recruitment strategy and extend these practices Trust-wide. By doing so, The Grove hopes to shift the culture towards a more supportive and adaptable working environment, benefiting both staff and students alike.