

A Day in the life of a Bretonside Teaching Assistant

Name: Kevin McKenna

Tell me a bit about yourself and your home life

Prior to working in schools, I was in the Royal Navy for twenty one year's, I have also traveled to ninety three different countries, in that time period. In amongst my hectic service life, I got married and we had three children (23, 20 & 17). We also have two pets, a chocolate Labrador called Milo and a miniature poodle called Pepe.

What made you want to become a Teaching Assistant?

The 1st reason as to why I decided to become a TA, was based what I had observed in the schools I had visited as a parent and school governor. That there was a clear lack of male support/role model(s) (primary and secondary) in all schools. The 2nd reason was more personal, I wanted to know and understand what my children would be facing and what challenges they should expect. So that my children would have a better chance in life.

How did your Study/Train?

I studied to become a TA through a local college in 2011/12, where I gained my QCF (Qualification Certification Framework) level 3 & 4 (GCSE grade and A-level). Then in 2016, I decided to do a degree in CAMHS (Child and Adolescence Mental Health) and graduated in October 2018. So collectively combining all my new gained knowledge, gave me a good start in my chosen career path of being a TA.

If there is such a thing, what's the average day like for a Teaching Assistant at Bretonside?

It is a cliché, but it is best suited for my line of work, which is there are no two days are the same here, as the children that we work with, needs can change as the day goes on.



What's your favorite things about your role?

The 1st part of our day is to “meet and greet” and this is my favourite part of the day and the most important. By purely watching the pupils body language, their facial expressions and talking to them too. Can give staff a good indicator of how the day may be for that particular pupil overall.

What's the worse thing about your role?

When you gain a child's trust and then they tell you what their lives are really like, through their eyes, this is the worse part of the job.

Do you think that you would like to train to become a teacher?

No

If you could give any advice to an aspiring TA, what would it be?

Be willing to learn and absorb the knowledge passed onto you and never be afraid to ask a question. Not knowing is not a sign a weakness, but instead it demonstrates the willingness to learn and improve your knowledge. This has a ripple effect and it can and will improve the pupils journey through our schools. As children only pass our way once, so let's get it right the first time.