



partnership **development** schools  
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## **Mentoring in ITT** **Glebe Case Study**

### **The School Setting**

Glebe Junior School has approximately 430 pupils on roll from a very mixed catchment. It is over 100 years old and one of five schools in the ex-mining community of South Normanton, situated close to Junction 28 of M1, in the middle of Derbyshire. Staffing consists of the head teacher plus 16 teachers (including deputy head and two assistant heads), 21 TAs, ICT technician, kitchen staff, midday supervisors, caretaker, cleaners and office staff.

Mentoring is seen as a key feature of the school's improvement plan and is integral to the management structure. At Glebe Junior School, all teachers have experience of mentoring or being mentored. The school believes that its teachers gain much from learning from others as well as imparting knowledge themselves.

They evaluate and develop their own practice according to what trainees bring to school with them, such as up-to-date knowledge of national initiatives and new teaching strategies, as well as the energy and enthusiasm shown by the majority of trainees. Teachers and TAs have become more reflective practitioners, are receptive to new ideas and developed their listening and questioning skills.

The Initial Teacher Training (ITT) co-ordinator has over 15 years experience of working with trainee teachers and currently works closely with Derby, Sheffield Hallam and Nottingham Trent Universities. The school has a comprehensive 'pack' which is given to trainees at time of induction, including an ITT policy.

### **Mentoring at Glebe School**

Mentoring and coaching activities are widespread throughout the school, due to the school's longstanding partnership with three partnership HEIs and staff's keenness to work alongside trainees. During the last three years, six teachers have been/are involved in 'Leading from the Middle' (LftM), where coaching is a key feature and one in Leadership Pathways. It is in the third year of involvement of the Partnership Development Schools project.

The school uses mentoring mainly in support of trainees. This is a major commitment for the school; for 2008/9 five teachers requested working with B.Ed and GTP trainees. Both new and experienced mentors have been given relevant training by the HEIs involved and are fully supported by the school's ITT co-ordinator.

NQTs are mentored by experienced members of staff, who have volunteered to take on such a role.

Teachers on the LftM programme are supported by their 'coach', a member of the senior management team.

As part of their performance management, staff are given relevant training or other support.

New members of staff, or teachers who have changed their area of responsibility, are mentored by a member of staff with that relevant experience.

The school is committed to the development and support of TAs; which includes mentoring. They take part in the school's performance development cycle, which includes setting of targets.

### **The Process of Mentoring**

Mentoring is driven by a specific focus, for example behaviour management or differentiation. This agenda is established by discussion with all relevant parties before a lesson observation. It is monitored against success criteria. Progress within the lesson observations is measured against the professional standards and informs subsequent planning.

This is followed by a formative discussion and further action planning. Formalised feedback is shared between all participants and next steps are identified.

Developing open professional dialogue, reflective practice and having a positive working relationship are essential elements of the mentoring process. Trainees structure their experiences using a range of proformas which help to support their developmental thinking.

The mentoring process recognises the importance of motivation and self esteem.

### **What Skills and Attributes do Mentors Need?**

CUREE Ltd (2007) have identified the following qualities

- Empathy;
- Objectivity
- Ability to build confidence and trust – to act as a critical friend;
- Ability to use questioning skills effectively in order to draw out longer and more detailed responses;
- Good communication skills;
- Willingness to be able to tackle difficult issues;
- Ability to give feedback which is practical and specific so it can be acted on;
- Good relations with other staff;
- Clear knowledge of what the role entails;
- Ability to convey a sense of mentor learning at the same time;
- Awareness of problems likely to face the mentee and an ability to judge when to involve other(s), either for additional support or for coaching in specialist skills.

### **Mentoring / Coaching Work Best When the Mentee Demonstrates:**

We have found that the most successful mentees demonstrate the following attributes

- Good listening and interpersonal skills
- The ability to reflect on their own experiences and action areas of development
- Readiness to accept support and respond positively to advice
- Recognition of the role of the mentor
- Making links between the practical experience and the university based training
- Informed use of established structures

### **What Are the Roles and Responsibilities of the Mentor?**

- Ensure that trainees are fully informed of school policies, procedures and processes;
- Induct the trainee teacher into the class, providing information relating to the children, classroom organization and the assessment framework;
- Provide the trainee teacher with appropriate experiences of teaching groups and classes and

arrange opportunities for trainee teachers to observe good practice and access the expertise of specialist staff;

- Support trainee teachers in achieving Qualified Teaching Status (QTS) by setting appropriate targets using the documentation provided by the ITT training provider;
- Supervise, monitor and assess trainee teachers and ensure that they receive immediate verbal feedback following formal observation and the agreed number of written appraisals each week;
- Arrange formal feedback meetings with trainee teachers to support planning, teaching and reflective evaluation (minimum once per week);
- Maintain written records of the mentoring process;
- Ensure that the trainee teacher engages in the whole life of the school, attending staff meetings and appropriate in-service events, meeting parents, attending parents' evenings and engaging in extra-curricular activities.
- Liaise with SLT and ULT in fulfilling the agreed partnership requirements with the ITT training provider;
- Communicate any concerns about trainee teacher's performance at an early stage to the trainee teacher, SLT and ULT.
- Attend meetings and training courses with ITT training providers.
- Gaining a Broad Base of Experience. Although it is not always possible, due to university requirements, for B.Ed trainees to observe a variety of colleagues teaching, the school's GTP Individual Training Plan expects trainees to spend the equivalent of half a day per week in the first term observing in other classes. It is believed that this gives the trainee opportunity to observe a wide range of teaching styles and expertise, along with seeing how different ages and parallel classes work.

### **Resource Needs and Implications**

The ITT mentors' time in school is paid for through HEI funding, generated by each trainee on placement. Other mentoring and coaching activities, such as: new staff, LftM, TA mentoring and coaching are paid for out of the school's budget.

### **Challenges and Solutions**

Mentoring is not without its challenges but for the most part these difficulties can be overcome: When working with an overly self-critical trainee we have found that one successful support strategy was to require the trainee(s) to articulate a more balanced view of their practice by identifying strengths as well as areas for development.

In order to avoid the trainee taking a disproportionate amount of the mentor's time we have found it useful to agree set times for discussion with a clear focus.

If a trainee is not receptive to hearing 'critical feedback', we ensure that we discuss this in a sensitive way, whilst ensuring that the area for development still set as a target for the future.

### **Outcomes of Mentoring**

Mentoring is a powerful vehicle for enabling professional development needs identified in the performance management cycle.

All teachers have experienced professional benefits through their involvement in mentoring activities. Teachers are continuing to be learners, who are energised by the enthusiasm of trainees who are embarking on a new career.

### **Why Does our School Host ITT Students?**

- Our mentors enjoy training adults as well as teaching children;
- Our pupils benefit from having additional adults in the classroom;
- Students often come with new ideas, or particular expertise or experiences, which they can teach our pupils, as well as passing onto experienced members of staff;
- Students are generally very enthusiastic and eager to try out these new ideas;

- Mentoring students has often been one of the foci for teachers' performance management targets
- It makes teachers evaluate their own practice;
- Over the years, our school has built up a good relationship with the HEIs.

### **Conclusion**

School based commitment to and involvement in ITT helps to assure the future quality of the teaching profession. It is a positive reflection of the high standard of ITT provision in the East Midlands that six, recently appointed, current staff at Glebe Junior were previously trainees at local HEIs and were also trainees at Glebe Junior School.