

Benefits of providing ITT placements within schools.

ITT placements are varied. They can involve one or more trainees on varying types of practice, for a timescale up to six weeks. Depending upon the route they have taken and levels of experience, trainees move from supporting to teaching groups of children, which then leads up to teaching the whole class. Trainees working in school can provide many benefits to the whole school staff.

One major benefit for teachers is having an extra pair of hands in the classroom - trainees can help by giving pupils more individual or small group attention, or leading projects covering more specialist topics. Staff benefit from trainees' skills and knowledge in subject areas, alongside the fresh ideas and up to date training that they bring.

Teacher/pupil relationships are strengthened, due to the increased quality time available to give to individuals and for deeper assessment and opportunities to observe them working with another adult. This allows more time to gain an insight into individual interests and motivational factors which impacts upon their self esteem and as a result the curriculum. Alongside the whole class, children with SEN have dedicated time to support their individual learning needs. Time is available for valuable assessment opportunities within the classroom.

Release time can be enabled to allow school improvement targets to be undertaken, allowing staff who are normally committed time out of the classroom without the need for supply cover and not eating up the budget which can then be used in other areas.

Having a trainee can improve an individual's mentoring skills and promote reflective practice throughout the whole staff team. As individuals communicate ideas and knowledge to trainees, this internalises and consolidates personal practice, enhancing teacher's self-esteem. This therefore contributes to teachers' continuing professional development opportunities and personal desire to improve practice.

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Teachers gain opportunities to update their knowledge and skills and opportunity to reflect on their own practice. Lead mentors have access to high-quality training and development opportunities, which can then be shared in house; to help identify knowledge gaps and overcome barriers to learning. Lead mentors are trained to deliver the information, advice and support needed to give to teacher's mentors within their school.

A key aspect of having trainees is contact with ITT providers and tutors from the universities. This promotes community links and relationships which are ongoing and strengthened over time. Teachers' awareness of the routes into further and higher education is raised.

Overall, the benefits that trainees provide the school can be invaluable not only on an individual basis but to the school as a whole.