



# UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

Dear School ITE coordinators, School Mentors, Class teachers, University Mentors, Campus staff

## February ITE Briefing

### Placement Overview

Our Y3 students have successfully completed their final placement. I would like to thank all schools, ITE coordinators class teachers and mentors who supported these students. I am VERY proud of all they have achieved under difficult and challenging circumstances. **A large number of Y3 students are continuing to work with their placement schools – these students passionately want to a make a difference and support schools, teachers and children through these difficult times.** We are encouraging them to do so, but are asking them to be mindful of their academic studies.

### PGCE

Our PGCE students are currently in their penultimate week of their 1B placement. These students will be starting their final, 13 week, placement from 8<sup>th</sup> March – 21<sup>st</sup> June. **Ideally, we need more KS1 placement offers for these students.** The overwhelming feedback we are receiving from schools is that our students have been incredibly valuable and have enabled schools to deliver an improved education to children. Our students can be flexibly deployed – schools are not restricted to the ‘traditional’ model of placement. **If you could use a PGCE final placement student, please contact us.**

**Y2 placement** - Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March - Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> April (excluding the Easter Holidays)

Our Y2s are due to start their placement on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March. The placement dates were pushed back in the hope that these students would be able to engage in face to face teaching as schools return. The Government is suggesting children will make a phased return to school from the 8<sup>th</sup> March. We are keen our students engage in as much face to face teaching as possible and would encourage schools to utilise our Y2 students, in school, working with the Key worker and vulnerable children from the 1<sup>st</sup> March.

### A reminder of our Key messages:

**Schools are encouraged to deploy students where they can best support children’s learning.** We are encouraging students to engage with ‘current professional practice’ and to offer their help wherever it is needed. Schools do not need to be constrained by ‘age groups’ or ‘classes’ when managing the work of students.

**Assessment needs to be holistic and realistic:** We cannot 'assess' students with the same degree of 'quality assurance' as we have a variety of models in operation... We CAN only do our best - we are unlikely to directly see evidence for all the standards at a particular level. Mentors need to use their **professional judgement** alongside all available evidence to make a 'rounded' assessment of a student's progress.

**A balance needs to be maintained between 'development' and 'assessment'**- mentors need to prioritise 'development' conversations and encourage students to engage with every opportunity to help schools deliver teaching and learning. Mentors need to encourage students to upload evidence of their work to ePad, however, assessment is secondary to full engagement with teaching and learning.

**Students need to be made aware of the challenges faced due to COVID and be realistic re their expectations and drive to achieve 'grades'**

**In the event that a student is likely to be below level 3 at the end of a FINAL placement the 'DFE trajectory' will be applied and further support given.** All stake holders will scrutinise evidence and ask the question; 'if the students had managed the full 26 weeks in placement, does the evidence suggest they would have been successful'? Borderline students will be offered further experience in school to ensure successful QTS. **This judgement can only be made after the final placement has ended.**

**The final report needs to acknowledge what the student hasn't been able to do (due to COVID)** allowing enhanced targets to be set for their NQT year.

Once again, I would like to emphasise schools would be encouraged to use student teachers flexibly to best meet the needs of children. We will be encouraging students to be as fully engaged as possible rather than being focused on 'assessment' towards teaching standards.

**Thank you for your continued support, please don't hesitate to get in touch if we can help.**

**Remain safe**

Philip Medway

Associate Head of School