



UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

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

January ITE Briefing

One again, schools, Teachers and Students are reacting to an ever changing landscape! Moving to online learning (again), managing vulnerable children, key worker children, and now... critical worker children and those without a laptop?

I am amazed by the resilience, professionalism, innovation and creativity of teaching colleagues.

Students currently on Placement

Our Y3s are completing their final placement and the PGCEs are engaged in placement 1B. I am delighted to have received a large number of emails praising the work of students under challenging circumstances. It is clear that many of our students are being deployed flexibly and effectively to meet the needs of children and are making significant contributions to their schools. We would like to emphasise a number of key messages to help manage our current student placements:

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. 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' - Emphasis needs to be given to 'solidly and confidently achieving level 3'. Schools and Mentors need to emphasis and encourage a breadth of understanding at Level 3.

In the event that a student is likely to be below level 3 at the end of 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 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.

Changes to the Year 2 placement

As in Tom Cowan's message dated 7th January, we have taken the difficult decision to postpone the Y2 placement. The new dates are as follows:

Monday 1st March - Friday 23rd April (excluding the Easter Holidays)

We came to this decision to relieve pressure on schools and to provide the best opportunity for our Y2 students to work with children in the classroom. Currently, the Government is indicating that children will return to school after the February half term, allowing Y2 students to work with children face to face and support schools as they manage yet another disruption in children's education. In the event schools remain closed, Y2 students will support schools with vulnerable / key worker children and online teaching.

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 of our students and please don't hesitate to get in touch if we can help. We do have students who could support teaching and learning on a voluntary basis

Remain safe

Philip Medway

Associate Head of School