



UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

Dear School ITE coordinators, School Mentors, Class teachers,

November ITE Briefing

Thank you to all colleagues who attended the online October mentor training sessions; we had over 60 attendees, demonstrating an enormous level of professionalism and commitment to train our students to become excellent teachers. Following the training and subsequent University Mentor meetings, we have been asked to clarify a number of points:

Expectations

The Institute of Education fully recognises the uniqueness of the circumstance all schools are in. School mentors and teachers are anxious they will not be able to provide the richness of experience offered to students in the past. For example, the use of 'bubbles' prevents observations of other year groups and schools might not be able to offer 'club' activities... **Do not worry**, University Mentors will be considering 'workarounds' to ensure standards are met and I have no doubt schools will provide our students the best possible experience given their unique situations.

Y3 BEd students missed 4 weeks of their Y2 placement due to lockdown. Please be patient with these students, in the first weeks of placement they will need to 'find their feet' and regain their confidence. If School Based Mentors have any concerns regarding a student's confidence or competence, please inform the University Mentor and we will engage our personal tutors to ensure school mentors and students are well supported.

Students need to meet the standards for QTS and will need a 'breadth' of experience. However, we recognise that schools will deploy students for particular activities given the need for 'catch up' and 'tutoring'. We support this – our students must be part of schools 'solutions' and be actively working to help children who have been disadvantaged through lockdown.

The administration and online load for all colleagues is currently extremely high. Students have been asked to be highly organised and professional. Students should be well prepared for placement and have been told they **MUST** adhere to the meeting schedules dictated by the mentors. Online work can blur boundaries and give rise to 'negotiating' meeting times etc. Mentors must safeguard and prioritise their time - students must be professional and respect this.

'Connectedness'

We are actively working to better connect our campus-based theory to school practice. Our current areas of interest are:

- Psychology of learning / memory - how children acquire new knowledge
- Early Reading / Phonics
- Behaviour management
- Home work – wider relationship with parents

- Working effectively with support staff
- Embedding the 2020 Relationships policy

School Experience tasks (SE) will be used to help student's action and reflect on their learning. Mentors will be informed of the SE tasks and how these tasks relate to evidence that can be used to inform the QTS teaching standards.

Support

PGCE students are about to enter their 1a first long placement block and the PGCE lead has integrated bi-weekly evening drop-in Zoom sessions for students ensuring they are well supported by the University whilst on placement.

We are here to help you. If you have any query, concern or are anxious, please contact your University mentor and ITE placements.

We will be offering a general Partnership drop in Zoom session 4pm - 5.30, Tuesday 24th November, to gain more understanding of school circumstances and to support School based mentors.

Thank you for your professionalism, commitment and support

Philip Medway

Associate Head, PloE