Embracing Change and Inspiring Minds

WELCOME BY CLAIRE BALL SMITH, DIRECTOR OF INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Academic year 2022/23 has been the first year in the last few where all placements ran to schedule, most trainees had a training year without interruption, and most schools were running normal timetables with their usual curricula offer happening. One would think then that a smoother training journey lay ahead for our 2022/23 cohort, but the small matter of quite a few extra Bank Holidays (during May) and the highly unusual feature of teacher strike days (in Spring and Summer Terms) meant that in fact, the trainee cohort had to juggle a lot of change and last minute interruption to their normal course programme, especially towards the end of the second placement. Quite a few trainees also taught in schools where Ofsted came along this year, as a return to more normal inspection activity resumed in the region.
But the cohort rose magnificently to those challenges and showed the University of York ITT Partnership that the future teaching generation is one to be very excited about, meeting, and then working alongside talented young teachers who want to make a difference in children’s lives. PGCE and QTS outcomes in the 2022/23 (small but perfectly formed) cohort are very good this year, and virtually all of our trainees who wish to enter into their first post and their ECT years have secured positions for this September. This is testament to their ability, skills and aptitude, but it is also a recognition of the impact of the programme and the support from our partner school staff and the university team during the all too short, 10 training months.

Our school colleagues in the ITT Partnership have managed to mentor our trainee cohort brilliantly alongside the ebbs and flows of their own professional lives: strike action for the first time in many years; the return to GCSE and A-levels with whole specifications being examined again; coping with the presence of Covid still veering its head in schools; and the continued not insignificant challenge of getting all pupils back into school, regularly attending, and coping with the return to a more normal school life. That mentors then manage to undertake such incredible levels of support, advice and training with the York ITTs who arrive in their departments/schools each placement, speaks to the incredible mentoring expertise we have in the University of York ITT schools partnership.

The University ITT team has also juggled an extraordinary level of extra business this year. Admissions activity (with several hundred international applications to process) has dominated, alongside Stage 2 DfE Reaccreditation demands on our time which the university PGCE team have had to fit in on top of the day job of working with our trainees. Imminent inspection preparations continued again in 2022-23 (although we were not in the end visited this year, again). So I’d like to take this opportunity to thank a very skilful, talented and dedicated University team of teacher educators – they are an incredible, brilliant, committed ITT team of staff, and so many of our partner schools report as such to our external team each year. Trainees are very lucky to work with such devoted teacher educators.
We say goodbye to two such fabulous educationalists in the PGCE team this summer as Anne Scott (Science CA tutor) and Linda Mills (MFL CA tutor) put down their lesson observation forms, lose their PebblePad passwords, and enter their well-deserved respective retirements. All of us in partner schools and at the university will sorely miss their valuable contributions to the programme and their unwavering support of literally generations of new teachers, and their pupils over the years. We will celebrate both of their superb careers in education, and then try to persuade them to carry on working within our ITT Partnership through occasional PGCE interviewing (Anne/Linda – you don’t get to run away that easily!). We wholeheartedly thank both of you for all your hard work over the years with successive trainee cohorts.

More widely, there are exciting ITT developments happening for the region. Our Lead Partner, Pathfinder Teaching School Hub, has run regular regional ITT steering group meetings for all the region’s ITT providers, where we meet to consider the region’s recruitment and retention issues at primary and secondary levels. We are very pleased and proud that Pathfinder TSH will become the University of York’s initial Lead Partner from 2024/25, and we are grateful to have such a supportive Teaching School Hub to work with, as we strategically plan for the teacher workforce across the region’s schools, training future generations of teachers for Yorkshire and Humberside children. One such venture we’re currently considering is a regional annual mentoring conference from July 2024 onwards – partner school colleagues should keep their eyes peeled for more details on this initiative which is underway.

In other news, the University of York’s ITT team has now completed three of five Stage 2 Readiness to Deliver (RTD) meetings with our DfE ITE Associate, and plans have been shared/ co-constructed as we have gone along with our Partnership of school on both ITaP developments and mentor training developments for 2024/25.
The feedback we receive from our ITT Partnership’s representatives and colleagues in Partnership Forum is incredibly useful as we co-construct and develop the new ITT programme that will operate from 2024/25. In particular, we’d like to take this opportunity to thank those ITT Partnership teachers and colleagues who have acted as critical friends for each of the four Reaccreditation workstream teams across 2022/23 – your advice/feedback has helped us sharpen our planning and make the new PGCE programme fit for purpose for our ITT Partnership going forwards. In this light, we will trial a pilot ITaP (Intensive Training and Practise) week in January 2024, again thanks to the incredible support, input and suggestions of our colleagues in schools. This time next year, all Stage 2 RTD meetings will be completed, and we will be approaching first delivery of the new ITT programme. One of the major reasons we are certain that the new PGCE programme will work well is because of the investment of time and energy our partner schools have given thus far in its development.

So it simply remains for me to once again thank all the teaching staff, mentors, professional tutors and leaders of our ITT Partnership partner schools, as well as to thank the small but wonderful cohort of 2022/23 for working so hard this year. The quality of the teachers that leave York this summer is down to the superb level of mentoring and professional tutoring they receive, giving our graduates the very best start to their careers as professional teachers and educators.

Whatever each of you is doing this summer, we hope the six weeks are restful, relaxing and rejuvenating for all. We will see you again in September, ready to start piloting many of the aspects of the new programme with our talented colleagues in the ITT Partnership.

Professor Claire E. Ball-Smith
Director of Initial Teacher Training
A cyclical journey from tea to trepidation: from tears to triumph to tremendous success....... And back to tea!

The life of an All Saints Trainee: class 2022-2023.

BY KATE VERNON-REES
ALL SAINTS, YORK

The first thing that springs to mind when I think about this year’s cohort is gratitude: thank you so much for sharing your journey with us - you have been hard-working, conscientious, funny (in a positive, quirky way) and above all kind. The profession is lucky to have such a committed, talented group of humanity joining their ranks.

This year has been less challenging than the last three (even with industrial action and the dreaded O visit) and it is good that this year all our trainees have had a clear run at a virtually uninterrupted practice. We have been like proud parents watching them become fully fledged teachers with jobs both locally (we are employing two and would happily employed all of them if we had space) and as far away as China. Lovely to see we are influencing a world: not just a county!
I want to say a big thank you to the University for its unending and unstinting support and help; to all our host teachers and mentors who work so hard to help and guide these fledgling teachers on their journey and to our pupils who just love having a trainee teaching them. Also a big shout out to our amazing librarians Sarah Firm and Fiona Sabine who involve the trainees at every step of their journey.

So back to tea – we started and ended with a session in the Bar Convent Café – in a place where faith is central to people’s way of life. We pray for our trainees who are going into the world that they have the strength and joy to make it a better place. (And one day I will remember to take a photo!!! Target for next year.)

"Sometimes special people come into our life"
Chilli Healer - Bluey's mum

BY ANDY YOUNG, CO-DIRECTOR
PATHFINDER TEACHING SCHOOL HUB

This was an exceptional year for our teacher trainees. Not only have our 23 trainees qualified and gone on to become teachers, but we’ve seen marriages, proposals, marathons completed, cake sales and more! My favourite quote from this year's cohort: "I went to Belfast for an interview. I didn't get the job because they said I didn't seem committed."

At Pathfinder Teaching School Hub we have a core set of values underpinned by working collaboratively and collegiately as we seek to ensure our young people go on to receive a world class start in life. We are committed to the notion that your "present circumstances don't determine where you can go, they merely determine where you start". I am so proud of how far our trainees have embodied these values. They have shown great kindness, determination and consistency in all that they have done.
Our Whole School Issues curriculum has themes of diversity, equity and inclusion built in, with the intention that our trainees learn how to put our most vulnerable young people at the centre of their thinking when it comes to pedagogy, learning and practice. I've witnessed transformational change within pupils due to the leadership of our trainees this year. Our young people remain better off as a consequence of their drive and ability to implement their learning into practice.

As a parent and a teacher, I am filled with hope about the future of our education system due to the continual surge of individuals who choose to dedicate their professional life to supporting our young people. Well done Pathfinder TSH cohort 2022/23!
Teachers have a way of just knowing. Of course I am referring to subject knowledge, always such a critical part of confidence in the room. It is more than that though, teachers have this way of being able to unpick an individual’s expression very quickly. When that normally bubbly student sits down just a little quieter than normal, or perhaps that spark in a child’s eye when they ‘get it’. Upon meeting my cohort of York ITTs, my inner teacher told me that I had a brilliant group ready to learn and progress. I can report that my intuition was correct! As I sit here now, writing to you, I am safe in the knowledge that our small group of York trainee teachers has achieved fantastic success this year.

On a personal level, my appointment as Director of the Outwood Institute of Education (covering for our amazing Emma Sikora’s maternity leave) was a moment of great pride, and also anxiety! I knew that I was going to play a pivotal part in what can be both a very rewarding, but also very challenging year. As fate would have it, one of my first duties was to introduce my York cohort to the responsibilities of teaching in a four day marathon of seminars. Nervous does not come close. Here I had 6 adults, who had made a huge decision to become teachers, and I was going to be leading one of their first immersive experiences in the job. I took a breath, and started. Revelation! I need not have worried at all. The inquisitiveness, energy and desire from my small but mighty group was immediately obvious. Here I had people who did not just want to teach, they wanted to be teachers. Seeing this was a lovely moment for me. I am a big believer in the responsibility and privilege of being a teacher. We are trusted sources of knowledge in our communities, and that matters.

The breadth of their experience over the year has forged them into able practitioners, who are to inspire students in their respective subjects. My observations have confirmed this conclusion. I have enjoyed exploring the solar system with year 7, analysing the Cold War with GCSE and immersion in Spanish, to name just a few lessons! Something I noticed incredibly early was the confidence being displayed in practice, despite being in the very early stages of the career.
As the year progressed, I sensed my cohort were developing that way of ‘just knowing’. It comes with time, and ages positively. The more individuals we meet, the more classes we teach, the more able we feel. It was happening before my eyes, and playing a part in that growth was a huge privilege. We recently enjoyed our Teach North Celebration Event, and prominent amongst my whole cohort were my trusty York team, ready to move into a bright teaching future!

In closing my reflections, I would like to thank the whole team at York, where I have always felt most welcome. Their support has been invaluable in what has been a rollercoaster year for me too! To all new teachers reading this, remember, a beauty of this job is that you are never the finished product. Take every opportunity to learn, acquire new skills, and grow with your years. Well done to all!

Karen McDonald
Maths Mentor

"A highlight for me this year was to see my second placement trainee really flourish on placement with us after a tricky placement one. It's so rewarding to see them come so far and make leaps and bounds of progress as a result of their hard work but also through clear and well thought out mentoring"

"Look after yourself! Remember that ultimately this is just a job, and whilst we all care about it and want to do as much as we can, you need to know when you need to seek out help and when you need to stop working for the good of your health. Use all any department resources available and always ask your mentor to help you when you need it!"
School Partnership Colleagues

Partnership Forum

REBECCA HARWOOD, PROFESSIONAL TUTOR AT SELBY HIGH SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY OF YORK ITT PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE, SHARES HER REFLECTIONS ON THIS YEAR.

I can’t quite believe it has been a whole calendar year since I was last approached by the University of York and asked to contribute to the end-of-PGCE newsletter. Where has that time gone?! I would like to offer my warmest congratulations to all of the University of York PGCE students who will be awarded Qualified Teacher Status in the coming weeks. You are joining a profession like no other!

I have, once again, thoroughly enjoyed leading on Initial Teacher Training in my school and have had the opportunity to work with some fantastic and very capable trainees. Dedicated, eager to learn and always showing the utmost professionalism, they have done the PGCE team proud. It has been a privilege to see the consistent progress made by the trainees throughout their placements and an utter joy to be welcomed into so many well-planned lessons where behaviour is very good, questioning is fantastic and levels of engagement are high. It is clear that trainees start their placements with a good grounding in what it takes to be a teacher and build on and practise this within our school context. The UoY trainees are able to carefully and succinctly evaluate their lessons and consider their next steps – both short- and long-term. I am excited for what the future has in store for those who trained with us, and know the young people they end up teaching will be in very safe hands. We as a school are thrilled that everyone who trained with us who wanted an ECT post for September has already secured one, and we wish them the very best for their ECT induction phase and beyond.

I’ve also enjoyed overseeing the whole-school issues training sessions this year. I have delivered sessions on assessment for learning, behaviour management, and coping with the demands of teaching to name but a few and I have also “called in the experts” a few times, enlisting specialist staff in school to deliver sessions on topics such as LGBTQIA+ issues, numeracy, literacy and securing first teaching posts. Next year, I am looking forward to continuing to build on the strong WSI sessions we offer trainees at Selby High School.

In my role as ITT Coordinator, I am well supported by my school and am able to attend the termly Partnership Forum meetings as the University’s School Partnership Representative. This means I have a voice for all schools who work in partnership with the UoY PCGE and can give a “front line” context to the day-to-day workings of the PCGE course. It is great to be able to give back to the PCGE team, who dedicate so much of their time to the trainees and the partner schools they train in. The changes to the PCGE framework for 2024-25 have been discussed at length in this year’s meetings, and I have thoroughly enjoyed mapping out what an ITaP (Intensive Training and Practice) week could look like at my school after Georgia Ramsay gave an introductory presentation on this in March.
As last year, I sat on the PGCE exam board as the School Partnership Representative and it was no surprise that once again the care for and commitment towards the trainees shone through from all of the Curriculum Area Leads. This is one of the key reasons the University of York continues to be Selby High School’s first choice ITT provider.

As planning is already underway for the changes to the PCGE in light of the reaccreditation I have really enjoyed working with Helen Granger and her work stream team, giving feedback on tweaks and changes to curriculum development, core content framework compliance and assessment development from a school’s perspective.

Those who know me well know I am always looking for a new challenge, and what better way than through some professional development? I have registered to start the National Professional Qualification in Leading Teacher Development in Autumn 2023. I am doing this through Pathfinder, who are one of UoY’s School Direct partners. I am looking forward to working with them in this respect. I am particularly interested in seeing how this will enrich my experience as Professional Tutor, in particular the delivery of my whole-school issues sessions. I also hope that it will allow me to look for bigger roles relating to ITT in the future.

I wish everyone involved in some way with the University of York PGCE a very healthy, happy and restful summer break.

Both trainees have been credits to the profession, being courteous, hard-working and wonderfully organized (the latter being very helpful for me!). As an English teacher too, it was excellent to mentor our English trainee, and it was wonderful to see their progress throughout the year. Observing a History trainee did help reveal my ignorance at times, but it was so much fun going into lessons and being able to learn as well as observe.

A long awaited reunion with Catherine Shawyer for our shared formal observation was a highlight of the year, and it was great to see her continued commitment to developing future teachers. I’ve also enjoyed putting together a training programme for our trainees, with York offering helpful ideas for training sessions, especially regarding Whole School Issues. Our English trainee is currently back for Professional Enrichment, getting a thorough look into all things pastoral, which stemmed partly from a training session with our KS4 Pastoral Lead. Finally, big congratulations to anyone reading this at the end of their training year. It can be an immensely difficult year at times, but it’s such a wonderful profession and you’ve clearly made it this far for fantastic reasons. Good luck in your ECT years - fly the York flag with pride!
HELEN MORRIS,
HISTORY MENTOR, QUEEN ETHELBURGA’S COLLEGIATE

What do you see as the benefits of being a mentor?
This is my twentieth year of teaching, and it has been a while since I last mentored a PGCE student so the language of the CCF was new to me. Mentoring has therefore helped me get up-to-speed with the standards that new teachers are assessed against and refreshed my knowledge of the current thinking on how students learn. It has helped me connect to wider professional networks and conversations, and I have continued this learning by enrolling on the Chartered College Certificate in Evidence Informed Practice.

What piece of advice do you have for our cohort as they become ECTs?
In my first year teaching, I had to hit the ground running, teaching both sides of the Y12 History A Level course. The departing teacher handed me a Penguin paperback on the French Revolution and suggested I start by learning the subject knowledge first and worry about making worksheets later. This proved sage advice which I still follow, reading up on new topics to get a good sense of the period and story, before stepping back and thinking about how to make it understandable to students. However, there is also the danger of falling down a rabbit hole of never-ending research so I would balance this with the second piece of advice I received - "Don't waste time making a jet engine, when a paper aeroplane would do the job." In other words, match time and energy to what the task requires, and don't be afraid to use existing resources, and a good textbook.

PGCE Administrator

As a member of the Partnership you will have communicated with the education-pgce-administrator@york.ac.uk account - but who is the face behind the email? Introducing.......Charlotte Leap.

1. How long have you worked on the PGCE team?
I joined in October 2022... I feel like I've been here for much longer!
2. What are your main roles on the PGCE?
Answering emails from trainees and placement schools. Supporting the wonderful PGCE team with their admin.
Processing assignments, Pebblepad, admissions, bursaries, helping with placements - anything PGCE related!
3. How can our school partners help you so admin can run smoothly as possible?
I'm always happy to hear from school partners and will answer emails as quickly as possible, so don't hesitate to get in touch with any questions!
Curriculum Area Focus
Team English 2022-23

“If you’re going to live, leave a legacy. Make a mark on the world that can’t be erased.” Maya Angelou

BY CATHERINE SHAWYER, CA ENGLISH LEAD TUTOR AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF ITT.

In the end of year newsletter last year, I wrote a piece in praise of normality reflecting on my appreciation of the return of many things, some large and some small, which Covid-19 had disrupted in the previous two years of the University of York’s PGCE English course. This year I wish to pay particular tribute to my English PGCE group and co-tutor, Nicola Towle.

It has been a truly successful year for this cohort of trainees and indeed in the history of the University of York English PGCE course. All seventeen English trainees completed the course and fourteen of them will start this September in their first posts as secondary English teachers. The other three all intend to go into teaching, but are spending one or two years abroad first, travelling and making up for the gap years they wanted to have as undergraduates but which Covid made impossible for them to have. It has been a glorious thing to witness how this group have fallen in love with English teaching and how all have decided to embrace the challenge of making “a mark on the world which can’t be erased.”
Throughout the normal challenges of a busy PGCE (with finances for most trainees very tight due to the lack of a Government funded training bursary, meaning many of them also had to take part time work just to live and complete their training), the group retained their enthusiasm, their open mindedness, their passion for all things English, their positive, “can do” attitude and most of all a spirit of collegiality and genuine kindness. When life threw curved balls at individual trainees or indeed at tutors, the warmth and compassion of the group was there to steady, reassure and reaffirm each person. Reflecting on this as I write this piece, it reminds me even more strongly how learning and growth happen best when we forge strong, trusting and respectful human relationships with others, whether that is when teaching pupils in school or working with peers and colleagues.

Reflecting also on the many highlights of the year such as another magical, description-defying visit to Shandy Hall focusing on creative writing and non-linear texts, an inspirational morning writing poetry at the National Railway Museum and a whole day plenary for the PGCE English course dedicated to creative English teaching strategies entitled “Lighting the Fire” (which W. B. Yeats possibly did or didn’t say!) has also again brought home to me what an absolute joy and privilege it continues to be to co-lead the PGCE English course at the University of York, supporting talented trainees’ transition into talented teachers.

Thank you and good luck to Team English PGCE Class of 2022-23.
Team Geography 2022-23

BY GEORGIN RAMSAY
GEOGRAPHY CA LEAD TUTOR

Heading towards the end of another academic year offers the perfect time to pause and reflect on the successes of everything that has been achieved in the fast paced 10 months of the PGCE course. What Team Geography 2022-23 have lacked in numbers, they have certainly made up for by the way in which they have embraced every opportunity and challenge which they have faced over this past year. The trainees' love of Geography is something that has really chimed with me this year and our trip to Flamborough Head in June (the first visit to this location for two of our trainees) was like Disneyland for geographers. I no longer felt like the lone person enthused by the perfect wave-cut platform, because my excitement was well and truly echoed by Team Geography, not to mention the fact that we almost tripped over a baby seal who was wonderfully camouflaged amongst the pebbles on the beach!

Team Geography have fostered really firm friendships, supporting each other through their kindness, honesty and brilliant senses of humour, in fact we have felt more like a close knit family than a PGCE cohort this year. A shared passion of our group has been a devotion to sustainability, so when the opportunity came for the trainees to design and lead a 6th form curriculum enrichment day on this theme at Archbishop Holgate's School, they quickly stepped up to the challenge. The day encouraged students to think hard about how the food we eat, the clothes we wear and the lifestyles we lead might impact the planet, people and places we live, whilst considering how we might build more sustainable communities in the future.
Further to this, we were invited by Jackson Sharp (Geography PGCE trainee 2021-22) to deliver the sustainability enrichment day at his school (Whitgift School in Croydon), which provided a wonderful opportunity for the Geography cohort to grow their professional connections with other teachers, whilst having the opportunity to experience a different school in a different part of the country. Seeing a previous trainee thriving after their first year as an ECT, working alongside the current PGCE cohort was a moment that filled me with great pride.

I am delighted that every trainee has secured a full time teacher of Geography role, ahead of September and I firmly believe that the students in York, Hull and Chelmsford are incredibly lucky to have such dedicated, hardworking and ambitious teachers joining their schools. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the brilliant mentors and geography departments that we have worked with this year for the time and dedication that has been given to growing really great Geography teachers and I wish you all a restful summer when it arrives.

**Suzie Eden, Geography Mentor**

“*I love the discussions that I have with student teachers about how to teach complex concepts effectively or how to help a student who is struggling. It’s really rewarding to see these ideas be put into practice and it also helps me to reflect on, and improve, my teaching!*"

“*Good teachers always try to get better at what they do. However, constantly trying to improve can also be a little overwhelming when you first start in the profession. Remember to make small tweaks to your practice, build these up over time and you’ll be flying before you know it!*"
Team History 2022-23

BY HELEN SNELSON
HISTORY CA LEAD TUTOR

Team History PGCE 2022-23 are superb! From the very start of the course, Team History proved themselves to be adaptable, collegiate, creative, hard-working and willing to learn. Times are tough in schools, but these young people are talented, inspiring and the schools they are going into are lucky. Of course I am biased! But this is also the view of people who have worked with them this year. People from other parts of the history teaching and history education world who have years of service and work in different parts of the country. We are so proud of them!

Developments in the PGCE History course this year have included work on school history’s contribution to education in an age of crisis. In January we welcomed Dr Alison Kitson and Dr Michael Riley from the UCL Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability to share their thinking on this topic. Then in June we worked for a day with Professor Paula Mountford from the University of York. Paula enabled us all to develop our own knowledge and to think hard about how topics we commonly teach can be viewed using an environmental lens. This is work that is gathering pace in the history teaching community and the history trainees are in a good position to support their new departments to adapt their teaching.

Trainees took part in continuing professional development with the wider community of history teachers as they approached the end of their course. They were part of a day led by Justice2History that involved over 50, mostly region-based, history teachers. We all gained knowledge needed, and had time to discuss and think about, how to teach black history in our own contexts. The trainees fed back that this experience had enthused and emboldened them to want to keep learning in this way, and to connect with CPD events happening for history teachers. They will be looking to their new schools to support them to do this, and to move beyond the limiting genericism of the ECF.
The strong development of the trainees across the year would not be possible without the dedicated school-based history mentors of our PGCE partnership. Their creative, compassionate and challenging ways of working with trainees enable them to develop quickly and to feel supported with the many challenges of the hectic PGCE year. And the mentors have been supporting the thinking around the changes to the PGCE required by the DfE’s Market Review. They share our concern to make sure that changes support high quality history ITE and strengthen out history teacher networks across the partnership.

As another year of PGCE history trainees are launched into the profession, the planning for next year begins in earnest. However, there is time for summer breaks and a time to reflect on the many positives of a year past year. We really hope this year’s Team History will keep in touch with us and with each other. We look forward to hearing about the next chapters in their lives.
Team Maths 2022-23

Maths PGCE Trip to Maths City

By Helen Granger
Maths CA Lead

During our project looking at Learning Outside the Classroom the maths PGCE group took a trip to Maths City.

This ‘hands on’ experience gave us the opportunity to explore many areas of maths and spatial reasoning beyond the curriculum, tested our resilience and made us think about the cultural capital trips like this can offer our students.

Building bridges, standing in a bubble and solving complex problems prompted me to both think more deeply about the structure of maths but also draw parallels between with these and the teaching profession.

I am so proud of how this group have built bridges of understanding amongst the students they have worked with, how they have stepped out of their comfort bubbles, and transferred their excellent problem solving skills to the maths classroom.
Team Maths Reflections and advice......

Key words to describe this year

- professionally growing
- developmental
- rewarding
- resilience
- unique
- challenging
- fun
- life changing
- self-reflection
- thought provoking

Use your observation time at the beginning of each placement wisely; get to know different styles of teaching and get to know your classes.

Take time to build relationships and have fun teaching.

Set clear boundaries to reduce stress and manage workload.
Team MFL 2022-23

BY MIRJAM BUEHLER-WILLEY
MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES
CA LEAD TUTOR

Life will never be the same!

We have drawn the golden ticket with an outstanding cohort of MFL trainees! Not only did you come prepared as well-organised, resilient and highly successful learners ready to face any challenge that the year might bring, you were unique: a group of lovely linguists willing and able to listen. What a difference this has made!

In February, you showed your hosting skills by looking after Masters’ level students from Muenster University giving them an insight into your life as trainees. You further excelled in academic achievements and showed excellence in the classroom. What set you apart was your willingness to act on feedback.

There were plenty of challenges but neither rail strikes nor teachers’ strikes deterred you from your aim of becoming excellent ECTs. As in previous years, you were an international group from a range of European countries such as France and Spain and other outlandish places like Manchester and Leeds. Many of you brought a wide range of experiences from working as TAs and FLAs instilling a love of languages and learning in Yorkshire and beyond.

Talking of love, there was certainly a lot of that in the air this year. We have had not one, no, but two inseparable couples in our MFL cohort. It was a very special moment when we were told about Joe declaring his undying love for Olivia in no other place than Madrid on a romantic boat trip.
We had promised that this year would change you, that you would experience levels of
tiredness never known before and that you would understand that teaching is the best
job that there is. It is therefore not surprising at all that all of you who wanted to start
their ECT year in September secured a job. Well done to you!

You have our utmost respect and admiration for your significant achievements. We feel
enormously proud and hugely privileged to have worked with such an outstanding
group of talented teachers and wish you continued success in becoming the best, most
inspirational MFL teachers.

Broadening Educational Horizons

Guest speaker, Yibing Jin (Headteacher of Wesley School near Shanghai), introduced her 'small'
Primary School of 900 pupils to us. She showed how
their values and principles of ‘learning by doing’,
collaborative learning and encouraging thinking skills
translate into action in the classroom and beyond.

It was so refreshing to see how very young learners undertake project learning by first
collating their prior knowledge in groups, then making a list of questions they want to
research and then organising themselves how to set about finding some of the answers.
At the end of each project, there is a presentation by the pupils for parents. The
youngest performers were 3 years old, microphone in hand, on stage, talking about their
learning to peers, teachers and parents - in English!

By the end of Yibing's presentation, we all wanted to book a flight to experience a very
different way of teaching and learning first hand! Our warmest thanks go to Yibing Jin for
taking the time to share her educational thinking and practice with us.
“Auf Wiedersehen” to Linda

This year, we are not only saying “Auf Wiedersehen” to a great group of trainees but also to one of our wonderful CA Tutors in MFL - Linda Mills. It is difficult to express how much we will feel this gap as we have been a close team of three for quite some time.

Linda was our steadfast rock, and the voice of calm and reason. We relied on her fantastic and extensive knowledge of MFL pedagogy and subject knowledge. In addition, her excellent sense of direction saved us from going round in circles or worse. She has kept us going in the right direction - in every sense of the word!

In Linda, trainees had someone who deeply cared for them and supported them in many and varied ways: buying a ring binder for them and showing how to organise it; wiping tears and staying back to help print seating plans at the risk of being locked in at school.

Linda has been a source of wisdom to us in MFL and the wider PGCE team. Her expertise in German is unrivalled, and her success as an MFL teacher indisputable. Students who were taught by Linda attained the highest grades and secured places in elite universities in the country.

We have lost count of how many trainees Linda has had responsibility for at All Saints RC School but we know that there are more than 70 teachers in this country and around the world who have made great contributions to the profession because of her teaching and influence.

Linda, thank you for your amazing and sustained contributions to the success of MFL here at the UoY as Associate Tutor and Mentor. You will be greatly missed! Be assured that it is definitely not good-bye but “Auf Wiedersehen” from us.

Mirjam and Liz on behalf of the PGCE Team
What a year it has been. Being in our new lab along with our technician support has meant that we have been able to run all of our practical sessions to give trainees beneficial experiences. All of our Science trainees who wish to enter the teaching profession this September have secured a first post, which is just brilliant. We were delighted to welcome back two of last year’s trainees to deliver a PGCE session on how their first ECT year has gone with lots of helpful advice for this year's trainees. We again went on our annual field trip to The Cranedale Centre which provides trainees with experience of carrying out varied and engaging field work, which was enjoyed by all. We wish all this year’s trainees well for the future!

With a mixture of gratitude and sadness, we also say goodbye to our brilliant Science colleague Anne who is leaving the PGCE tutoring team. Anne's ability to create a nurturing and empowering environment has fostered a generation of confident and inspired science teachers. We extend our deepest gratitude to Anne for her invaluable service and wish her the very best in her future adventures.

A YEAR IN PICTURES, PGCE SCIENCE.....
Trainee Reflections

Teaching History in an age of climate crisis

BY AMY NUTTALL

When I was initially presented with the idea of climate change education within schools, I felt passionately against the idea and even vocally challenged it during the session. I felt angry that I was being asked to discuss and educate students about something that already causes them and us much anxiety.

Climate anxiety is real, and our students feel it deeply, as do I. The students we teach have grown up with reports of austerity, unemployment crises, rising food prices, a pandemic, and plenty more stressors. I felt that it was inherently irresponsible for me to ask them to contend with yet another piece of bad news - our changing climate. And worse still - to pass on the baton as if our mess, and that of our predecessors, was theirs to own and to fix. I still feel this way: I will not place additional stress on our students, but I will educate them. Knowledge, after all, is power, and it is important that we give our students the weapons with which to fight perhaps the biggest battle of the modern era.

The second of our sessions on climate education was given through the lens of ‘radical hope.’ Radical hope is exactly what it says on the tin - it is hope in the face of overwhelming evidence that we should feel anything but. To view climate change with anything other than radical hope seems to me like giving up. We must not only take on this attitude ourselves, while the ice caps melt and species are dying out at a rate of 2,000 a year, but do our very best to imbue our students with this feeling, too. The history classroom seems a great place to start.

History teaches us where we came from, and how things came to be as they are. To fight against climate change, we need to understand both of these things. One proposed change, offered by Teach the Future, a student-led organisation campaigning for the inclusion of climate change in education, is that the history curriculum should tie in changing attitudes toward environment across history. Teach the Future offer the notion that climate change education is something which should be tied into lessons, rather than being the main focus, and I wholeheartedly agree.

Asking teachers to make major changes to lessons and curricula would be almost as wrong as placing the stress and burden of climate change on our young people, but teachers can and should include bitesize facts and skills which direct students’ thinking toward human impact on the environment across history.
For example, when teaching the industrial revolution, students could be asked to consider the most significant invention in terms of its impact on the environment - a quick discussion or written task that includes historical thinking, knowledge, and climate change. This way, teaching climate change needn't be a huge undertaking, and it needn't place blame or cause anxiety for student or teacher. It is something all history teachers can place into their lessons.

But how can we ensure we deliver through that lens of radical hope? Simply educating students is hopeful in itself. It models to students that we must talk about the climate, and that we aren't ignoring it. Students can often feel angry, as I did and still do, at previous generations for leaving us in this mess. Including it in our teaching and placing importance on it demonstrates that we think there is hope for a better future, and that we are doing something about it. Students can not, and must not, see us standing by.

For my Professional Enrichment placement, I wanted to explore the role of Science technicians in schools. Technicians are a crucial part Science departments, with many teachers recognising that they would not be able to carry out their jobs without their support, however what they do on a day to day basis is often not known. I had expected to only be shadowing the team, however with their help and support I felt confident enough to independently work as a technician. The training that they provided was exemplary and I felt extremely supported. Their scientific knowledge was second to none and I learnt more about the science of practical work in the week and a half that I worked with the technicians than I did during the rest of my PGCE. I got an amazing insight into the many roles that technicians play - from health and safety officer to scientific advisor, pep talk giver and teaching assistant at times.

Technicians are often overworked, poorly paid and under recognised in schools. They work extremely hard to ensure that pupils can experience the best practical work, often with limited resources. Most technicians will have an equal science qualification to that of science teachers; indeed, most of the teachers I spoke with recognised that technicians had a better scientific understanding than they did. Working as a technician was truly one of the most enjoyable times of my PGCE and gave me such an appreciation of the work that they do.
The team at Tadcaster Grammar - Margit, Zoe and Lindsey - continued to support me in my Professional Enrichment placement with exactly the same dedication and enthusiasm that they supported me during my ITT placement. I knew that if I got into a lesson and realised I had ordered completely the wrong practical, they would go out of their way to help me. Working as a technician made me understand that this was a two way street - support your technicians, and they will support you. Zoe, Margit and Lindsey all said that they were as helpful as they were because the department was so supportive of them. Relationships with technicians are some of the key relationships that ITTs and ECTs can make, and it is well worth taking the time to learn their names and a bit about them. You never know; you could also end up in a Period 1 lesson realising the practical you ordered is entirely the wrong one.

A week at a Primary School

BY BECCA BEIOLEY

“We’re Secondary school teachers, why do we need to do a week in a Primary school? Is it to make sure that we want to teach Secondary?” This is something that I had heard frequently prior to doing my Primary school placement as part of my Professional Enrichment fortnight. However, as soon as I arrived at OLQM, I realised why this placement is an essential part of the course.

My first teaching post has been secured at All Saints in York and for most of the week, I was placed in Year 6 at OLQM, which is a feeder school of All Saints. This enabled me to get to know the students that I will soon be teaching come September when they become Year 7s - a unique thing to be able to do as an ITT - and enabled me to see the preparation for the transition between Primary and Secondary school.

I spent my time assisting in both Maths lessons and other subjects, with a particular highlight being told that I was great at puns during an English lesson surrounding creating newspaper headlines (showing that Maths teachers can do English!). I also spent some time doing 1:1 interventions with times tables, spellings and reading which enabled me to gain experience doing smaller group teaching both inside and outside of my subject.

Spending a morning in Year 1 also exposed me to another side of education by witnessing the early development of Phonics and Maths in education, which was particularly interesting and truly highlighted to me the importance of all stages of Primary education.
Reflections on my PGCE year

By Gemma Makin

My TA'ing was not just confined to inside of the classroom; I also got to experience swimming, topic (including being tasked with making salt dough), and PE lessons which, as a Maths teacher, are not usually part of the daily routine. This experience highlighted to me how valuable experiencing life in a Primary school is, even as a Secondary teacher, and made me appreciate the value of Primary school education for Secondary teaching. The week was a highlight of the PGCE, and I am so thankful for the experience.

From day one, every tutor on the PGCE course was very, very clear. The PGCE year was going to be the most intense and challenging year of our lives. “They must be exaggerating!”, I thought smugly to myself. “I’ve worked in education before, I know what schools are like - nothing will be a shock to me!”.

But whilst this year has been intense, difficult, and an absolute emotional rollercoaster, I wouldn’t have missed a single moment of it.

The PGCE really tests you on a personal level, and you find out things about yourself that you never knew. I’ve found resilience and determination that I never knew I had, and have blossomed in terms of confidence. The thought of standing in front of thirty students terrified me at the start of the year, but I now do it with total enjoyment, confidence, and passion (even to the point where I bring that passion home with me - sorry to my partner and my mum, who regularly complain that I’m using my “teacher voice” on them...!)

There have been so many highlights this year. There have been so many lessons that I’ve sat down at the end of, absolutely exhausted, but smiling ear-to-ear - because I’ve loved every minute of teaching them, and because the students have impressed me so much. There have been so many hilarious (and sometimes enlightening!) things that the kids have come out with - I only wish I’d written some of them down! Outside of the history classroom, I have loved being a form tutor. I’ll certainly remember my high-spirited, mad-cap, but absolutely lovable Year 7 form at Fulford for many years to come!
The biggest advice I would give to new trainees would be to throw yourselves in at the deep end. Yes, it can be scary and difficult - but you never know what opportunities it'll bring your way. I spent most of my first couple of weeks at All Saints running around annoying everyone I could, asking if I could help out with any extra-curricular activities - which led to some fantastic opportunities in the school library. I never thought I'd be helping lead commemorations for Holocaust Memorial Day, or running my own history book club, but that was what I ended up doing - and loved every minute of it.

I'd like to say thank you so much to everyone who has helped me on this rollercoaster of a year - from the WSI and CA teams, to all of the professional tutors, mentors, teachers, and support staff at All Saints and Fulford School. It's been an intense year, and I've certainly shed quite a few tears - both happy and sad! - and I really couldn't have got to this point without all your amazing advice, guidance and support.

Moving to Placement Two

By Katie Hopwood

To be honest I was a bit apprehensive about going to my second placement school. Going from a large inner city school to a large rural school, I didn't know what types of challenges I would face. How wrong I was!

The staff at Driffield School couldn't have made me feel more welcome, from members of the History department to members of SLT.

My mentor, Rosie Gardener, was a supportive force throughout my placement. When there was something to improve within a lesson, this feedback was never given in a negative way, rather thinking of different strategies we could use in the next lesson to make it even better. All host teachers were also great at giving supportive and constructive feedback that I will be taking into my ECT years. I never felt like an outsider in the department which is one of the reasons I believe I had such a good experience at Driffield School. Whilst the placement wasn't without its challenges in some places, the support was always there if I ever needed it.

The students, for the most part, were all lovely and welcoming to me in the classroom. I developed good working relationships with my Year 8 form which helped when teaching a number of them in history lessons. There are some students that I won't forget for years to come, their cheeky nature always coming across in the classroom that made them a pleasure to teach.
My professional tutor, Bruce Whitfield, also put together a great training programme for the trainees and listening to experienced teachers talk about behaviour or teaching to the top really helped my professional development. Part of the programme was to informally observe the other trainees in Maths and English where we were able to give each other positive feedback in a low stakes environment as well as gaining further insight into how other subjects are taught.

Overall, it's fair to say that I had a very positive experience at Driffield which comes down to the welcoming and supportive department and the lovely students.

It has been a long year....

BY ED GOUNDREY

Everyone told me the PGCE was intense, but it’s hard to understand this without going through it. Navigating the plethora of commitments to schools, the university, and friends and family, is overwhelming. Waking up and facing a new challenge every day quickly becomes exhausting. Crucially, the course causes you to question who you are and what you want for yourself – there is no way to encapsulate the fraught experience of adjusting to the change of character that occurs during the PGCE year.

Despite questioning whether the career was for me, there was always something that made me stay on the course. Fortunately, I was placed in two schools with supportive departments and fantastic mentors, alongside phenomenal guidance and support from staff at the university – when faced with challenges, I had a wealth of wisdom and kindness to draw upon. I also met a great group of fellow trainees, who I am glad to call friends. But it was only when returning to my second placement for professional enrichment that I realised what kept me going during the year; the students who I taught were genuinely happy to see me return. I understood, then, that I had done something positive for these young people, and in that, had embarked on a career I could not easily give up.

Because, while it is difficult to express the challenges of the year, it is equally hard to express how much I have gained. I am a far more resilient person, and far more confident than I was. I have gained a lot of good memories, of triumphant lessons, of conversations with students, of long and good days. I came away from both placement schools knowing, “I’ll miss this place.”

To future trainees: know the students – it both helps with classroom management and is far more rewarding. Embrace imperfection – you cannot please everyone, so do all you can, and move on.
Remember you are a human being before you are a teacher. Lastly, make a note of when it feels worth it. It’s easy to forget, amidst the intensity of the year, but those moments will keep you going during the course and will stay with you long afterwards.

**Highlights of my year**

**BY ABIGAIL BROOKES**

What a remarkable year it has been! Allow me to share the true highlights of this year.

**Shandy Hall:** Embarking on a picturesque drive to Coxwold, we arrived at Shandy Hall. The magnificence of the house and its meticulously maintained gardens, which serve as a habitat for over 400 species of moths, left a big impression on me. As we arrived in the morning, Patrick welcomed us and guided us through the house where 'The life and opinions of Tristram Shandy' were penned. The tour of the surrounding grounds and a glimpse into the local church further enriched our visit. During a break for a picnic lunch in the gardens, we ate the delectable creations of Nicola Towle, including exquisite brownies and lime cake. We then explored the gardens.

We spent the afternoon discovering Patrick's fantastic collection of preserved books. We were able to carefully explore this collection of non-linear texts, understanding the stories they tell and how they could be used effectively with children. I found most interesting a book picked by Beth, which included various prints or pictures - optical illusions. I found a book which retold stories using the major and minor tarot card deck, incorporating beautiful golden foil cards into the story.

Our discussion on the criteria that define a book was thought-provoking. We explored the aspects of text inclusion, chronological order, and the necessity of a conclusive ending. Similar to the narrative style employed in Tristram Shandy, which meanders and jumps back and forth in time, interweaving the events of Tristram's life with the author's commentary, we contemplated the impact of this fragmented storytelling technique. Such an approach fosters a sense of closeness between the reader and the characters, offering glimpses into their lives from different angles and perspectives.

This day was so special, fascinating and quite magical - one I shall never forget! Thank you Catherine and Nicola for taking us on that wonderful journey!
The Railway Museum

We loved the Railway Museum. It was a glorious day of sunshine, and we loved immersing ourselves in the steam train adventure. We enjoyed wandering around, exploring, and writing our poems and poetry.

My favourite part was boarding the Shinkansen, a Japanese train. Jill and I boarded the train to find trainees already sat and enjoying the beauty of it! We decided to write our poems on the Shinkansen, I based mine on the train itself and its beauty. I loved hearing everyone's poems once we met back up, Catherine's brought a tear to my eye.

WELCOME ABOARD THE YORK TRAIN

We are on a journey…
"Assistance must only be given by trained and authorised personnel"
We are on a journey.
"Transformation in progress"
Are we there yet?

We are on a journey…
Are we there yet?
We are on a journey; we are on a journey.
Are we there yet? Are we there yet?

"Ladies and gentlemen we will shortly be arriving at the
Queen’s Train Station
Otherwise known as
QTS.

We've arrived!

Pause and admire the view.
Next stop: Station ECT
journey
a
on
are
We

CATHERINE SHAWYER
The support of a good mentor

BY JESSICA BALL

This year really has been a whirlwind... to think a year ago I had not stood in front of 32 teenagers before, nor knew the key components of a good lesson, feels a little crazy! As I reflect on all I have achieved and learnt in the last year, I definitely would not have been able to do it without my school mentors and host teachers.

Having a supportive mentor this year ensured I was able to reflect on my practice, balance my workload, continually learn and enjoy the training process of working alongside the department. Charlotte Brown, my mentor at Archbishop Holgate's School, always took the time to listen, help me in my practice and make me laugh along the way, and her mentoring ensured I felt really supported at my placement.

Charlotte was always positive and constructive with my feedback and as we discussed the CCF. She always made sure that my feedback was clear, specific and included points for improvement that I would be able to instantly work on with each of my classes, and also provided really useful feedback to take to my second placement and to continue working on as an ECT. Charlotte provided constant support and lots of time beyond the allocated one-hour mentor meetings to ensure I understood feedback and had a chance to ask questions. When I started to apply for jobs, Charlotte read my applications and helped me plan and review my lesson resources, all while remaining positive and not trying to put her own opinion across, but allowing my ideas to lead the discussions.

Part of what made Charlotte a supportive mentor was that her teaching practice was an excellent example to imitate and apply to my own practice. She is student-focused, hardworking and quick to reflect on her own lessons, meaning that right from the get go I knew the kind of traits that would allow me to also become an excellent teacher. So the impact of Charlotte's supportive mentoring is twofold. Firstly it is due to the many hours (and I mean many!) she devoted to me every week beyond that of our weekly meetings, and it's also due to the example she set in the classroom and her compassion for her students. Charlotte, thank you for all you have done for me and your students this year!
Experiencing Alternative Provision

BY ALEXANDRA IVENS

I have been lucky enough to spend two weeks experiencing what it is like to work with students who require provision outside of the mainstream classroom. I spent one week at the Danesgate Community in York, followed by one week in the ARC resource unit at Marvel College in Hull.

Whilst at the Danesgate Community, I spent time working with students from both provision streams. This included students who were attending the Danesgate Community for short term respite, and students who had studied at Danesgate from their primary school days. In every corner of the Danesgate Community, the common theme I saw was the close understanding that all staff had for their students. Students have a small team of staff who work closely with them and understand their specific history and needs. Staff work closely with one another to provide effective support for students. The students at the Danesgate Community are supported to engage with a full curriculum, which challenges them and provides them with a strong foundation for success after their school career. I particularly enjoyed my time working with Danesgate’s vocational team, where I saw how students were being prepared for post-16 employment in a relaxed environment which suited their needs.

The ARC resource unit at The Marvell College differs from Danesgate in that it supports students who remained a part of the mainstream school. The ARC at Marvell is a relatively new facility which supports students who are struggling in their mainstream lessons due to behavioural, or social, emotional, or mental health needs. The ARC has a small dedicated team of staff who know the students well. Relationships are key when working with students in the ARC, and indeed, in the wider school. This is something that I will take forward with me into my teaching career. The ARC provides a support programme which is tailored to each student and includes support from a trained ELSA and Wellbeing Mentor. There is an alternative course for students at GCSE level where students can be taught in a much smaller environment, and students at Key Stage 3 have regular sessions with subject specialists when working in the ARC. As at Danesgate, there is a clear purpose behind the team at the ARC: to support students to access their learning, and prepare them for their futures.
My experiences at the ARC and at Danesgate have shown me how students who may otherwise find it difficult to access an effective education can be supported emotionally and academically to succeed. It has made it apparent that this can be done through the forming of strong relationships, and a good understanding of the individual needs of each child. I am incredibly grateful to Chris Smith at the Danesgate Community and to James Krebs at The Marvell College for hosting me and for giving me the opportunity to experience the vital work that they are doing to support young people.

How did the PGCE course prepare me for my ECT year?

BY NIAMH CARVILLE

In September, the prospect of embarking upon my PGCE at the University of York was honestly quite terrifying. However, as I end this whirlwind of a year, the prospect of moving on to my teaching career seems full of excitement and possibility. This is largely due to the wealth of help and experience the PGCE has provided me with. Throughout the year WSI has provided not only statutory knowledge, which is essential to any beginning teacher, but guidance for every possible avenue of teaching. The experienced team who run the course have created a programme in which any possible fear any PGCE student may develop (which there will be a few!) is answered and explained by a wealth of professionals. From PebblePad, to statutory guidance, to the dreaded behaviour management there is a wealth of knowledge to be gained through these sessions from the experienced team on hand. Moreover, the inclusion of guest speakers throughout the years not only ensures that a wealth of experiences are shared but will open your eyes to other opportunities within teaching you may not have thought about before.

I cannot say the idea of teaching history was a worry when walking into placement as the wonderful Helen and Ruth made sure I was more than prepared. Anything you may wonder about teaching history will be known and answered within a CA session with these two! I feel very lucky to have such a solid framework about the nitty-gritty of teaching history upon entering my ECT year and have no doubt that should I have any questions throughout this upcoming year, Helen and Ruth will just be an email away. Moreover, these sessions allowed for a wealth of networking- from guest speakers to the cohort itself, I know I have many people to turn to should I ever need it. I was also very lucky to have two great placement schools this year, a sentiment shared by most members of my cohort regardless of where they ended up. Again, the university puts a lot of care into ensuring that not only you as a student are prepared to walk into placement, but the mentors within the school are more than experienced and prepared to support you.
I was incredibly lucky to have two amazing mentors this year who helped not only helped me develop professionally but supported me amongst the many highs and lows that the PGCE year brings. Though the observations may seem nerve-wracking to start (especially the university ones!) they have undoubtedly crafted me into a reflective practitioner and led me to develop strengths upon which I can build within my upcoming ECT year, along with providing guidance for my future mentor as where to focus my continued learning.

Overall, the university has given me a solid beginning to my professional career, as well as encouraging healthy working habits and routines throughout the year. So, though I am sad to finish this year (despite the rollercoaster it was) I’m not worried about the year ahead, but excited and prepared to get stuck in.

A toothbrush and toothpaste

BY DAVID TURNER

A toothbrush and toothpaste; a phone and a charger; food and cutlery; assignments and teaching practice: all these are examples of things wonderful as a combination but fairly useless on their own. The assignments may seem like an impending chore, harking back to the dark days of undergraduate study, and not the reason why you joined the PGCE course. If, like me, you joined the PGCE to teach in a classroom, in front of people, teaching a subject you enjoy then you are not alone.

But this comes up short. It is so difficult to just teach. It makes life a lot easier if you can remove yourself from the classroom, reflect, and indulge in the wisdom of subject experts. In a strange poetic way Wordsworth was right to suggest that we fill our “paper with the breathings” of our hearts. That is to say, it is insurmountably useful to write stuff down.

In a more systematic way, there are 3 main reasons how assignments have helped my professional development: (1) link between theory and practice (2) expert feedback (3) confidence.

The theory side of the course is incredibly useful. From metacognitive theory to behaviour management there are countless books, journals, articles, mapping the various approaches to classroom practice. This presents an endless gold mine of tools for a beginning teacher to try out in the classroom, safe in the knowledge that they have been tried and tested. One example that springs to mind that I would not have conceived of if it were not for reading the theory side of things was using the example of baking a cake to teach causation. Students first distinguish the key ingredients, then the method for getting from A (a mess of ingredients) to B (a lovely jam roly-poly).
The joy of the assignment is the forced link you have to make between the theory and practice, constantly forcing you to keep in mind the collective wisdom of other teachers, and testing whether they work for you, in your classroom.

On the theme of subject-specific experts, it is a delight to receive feedback from people who really know what they are talking about. Each line examined, each misplaced punctuation vigorously pointed out, each reflective remark praised. The tutors genuinely take an interest in the work you produce and give fair and genuine feedback, which feeds my third and final point. The confidence you gain from hearing positive and professional feedback from your tutor/marker completely transforms your practical classroom teaching. I remember struggling to project my voice early on in Placement 1 and that dreaded imposters syndrome eating away on the side, until my feedback from Assignment 1. The persona transformed. I can promise you, the constructive feedback from tutors and the confidence that gives you makes all the effort of the assignments worth it and helps your professional development more than any other aspect of the PGCE.

What I really appreciated from my mentor.....

JUST A FEW TRAINEE REFLECTIONS

Made me feel part of the department, had good communication and I never felt like a second thought.

Integrating me into the department and supporting my progression from student to teacher.

Cheering me on and celebrating wins

Lots of praise.

I appreciated the weekly pep talks that I can cope with a teacher’s workload even if I don’t want to!

Every success was celebrated.

My mentor brought me coffee, made me laugh and listened when I cried after horrid year 10s.

Kept reminding me that it is okay not to know everything; we are still training.

They were realistic with their expectations.

Supporting me through something I struggled with by providing additional opportunities to observe.

Provided research before each meeting which expanded my pedagogy.

Consistent support and effective feedback that allowed me to develop.

Feedback was given in a positive and encouraging manner, it really helped with my confidence in the classroom.

Always manage to pick out the positives of a lesson even if it went really wrong and made me laugh.

My mentor was so supportive and listened to me when I was stuck or panicking, it gave me a real confidence boost.
ECT: The Next Adventure

BY ALISON BAILEY
PATHFINDER TEACHING SCHOOL HUB AB LEAD, CONSULTANT TRAINER, PRIMARY LEAD ITE COORDINATOR

AND FIONA HOPKINSON-KEARNEY
PATHFINDER TEACHING SCHOOL HUB CO-DIRECTOR - ECF, AB, NPQS

Congratulations on securing a teaching post, and welcome to the next step of your journey in this wonderful profession!

You already know that you have acquired a new three letter title, ECT* (although there will be colleagues who still refer you as an NQT* – bear with us, it was NQT for 30 years...), and with that title comes both rights and responsibilities. By the time you read this you will probably already know the class(es) you are to teach in September, and at least the names of your mentor and induction tutor – both very important people in your professional life over your induction period. Occasionally, the two roles may be taken by the same person – still a key figure in your life as an ECT.

The ECF* is now embedded firmly as part of the ‘Golden Thread’ of support and CPD* that runs through the teaching profession in England from ITT to the executive leadership of a MAT*, and you will find that the it builds on the CCF* you know and love from your ITT*. You will continue to ‘Learn that...’ and ‘Learn to...’ throughout your career, and will be reflecting on, and applying, that learning now for your own class(es) as you shape yourself into the teacher you want to be.

At times the constantly changing nature of education can seem overwhelming but the reality is that it is an invigorating and dynamic profession which is never dull. Evolution and refinement of teaching and learning are leading to improved outcomes in our schools and it’s worth remembering that underpinning all these reforms isn’t just terminology, it’s vision, values and evidence.
At Pathfinder it has been really exciting supporting and developing our region’s teachers and leaders, knowing we’re doing it with the best evidence-informed resources we can use. Whether you are doing this through granular self-study as an Early Career Teacher on the Early Career Framework, or your MAT CEO* is on the NPQ* for Executive Leaders, there are strong key concepts and frameworks underpinning the different pathways of Continuing Professional Development.

So as you prepare to fully embrace one of the best vocations in the world, our advice to you as you prepare to be an ECT is this:

- Keep that appetite for learning alive, foster it in your pupils and in yourself;
- Find out more about instructional coaching and deliberate practice - you’ll be coming across them a lot;
- Remember high-quality teacher CPD is THE best bet we have for creating lasting and meaningful change in our classrooms and as a result getting great life chances for our students. Think about that for a second, that’s a powerful statement;
- Take the time to invest in your own development - you will never regret expanding your knowledge and understanding;
- Whenever you can, find out what’s happening in the world of education research.... And have a coffee and some chocolate whilst you do it - you deserve it!

A good place to start finding out more about the opportunities available to support your continued training and development is Pathfinder’s website https://pathfinder-tsh.co.uk feel free to contact us at info@tsh.pmat.academy if you have questions about your ECF-based induction or statutory induction and the role of the AB.

Your handy glossary if you need one:

**AB** - Appropriate Body  
**CEO** - Chief Executive Officer  
**CPD** - Continuing Professional Development  
**ECT** - Early Career Teachers  
**ECF** - Early Career Framework  
**MAT** - Multi Academy Trust  
**NPQ** - National Professional Qualifications  
**NQT** - Newly Qualified Teacher
A catch up with PGCE Cohort 2021/22

ONCE YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE PGCE YOU ARE STILL AND WILL REMAIN PART OF THE UOY PGCE FAMILY. HERE JANE, ANNABEL AND LAUREN UPDATE YOU ON THEIR JOURNEY BEYOND THE PGCE AND DESCRIBE THEIR FIRST YEAR AS ECTS.

My first Year of being an ECT

BY MRS O’EHLEY
MATHS TEACHER, HUNTINGTON SCHOOL

I am now almost at the end of my first ECT year as a maths teacher at Huntington Secondary in York. I can’t believe the time has gone by so quickly. In September, I remember the initial increase in teaching hours was scary, but you soon build up stamina. Also, probably the best thing as an ECT is that no one observes you all the time – hurray! (apart from, hopefully, the students).

I have loved having more autonomy: finally having your own classes and ownership of lessons is liberating and gives you the chance to find your own teaching style. It is also great to feel that a class “belongs” to you - you can really invest in and be responsible for students’ progress. This year I started to feel like a “real” teacher – part of the working machine of the school, not just in the maths department. Having a form of year 11s seemed like a challenge to begin with, but over the months I got to know them all and really miss them now they have finished their GCSEs and are on summer break 😞. I have also had a regular lunch break duty (patrolling the playground, chatting to students, breaking up the occasional fight!) and a bus duty at the end of the day (my first experience of being a lollipop lady but sadly without the high-viz or the stick).

In my first term I was also responsible for a KS3 drama club at lunchtime. This was a great way to meet students not in my maths classes and also to see a different side to those who are. Building relationships with students at school is definitely one of the highlights of teaching. In addition, I am lucky that the maths department at Huntington is very supportive. There is always someone around to ask for help or advice and a real sense of camaraderie. I have loved having my own classroom – not having to cart tons of protractors, compasses and calculators from room to room makes such a difference.
Planning lessons also gets easier and quicker in your first year: it used to take hours to painstakingly compose a single lesson but I now manage to get all of mine done within the school day, leaving most evenings and weekends free. Something I have learned is that it is really important to “work smart”. The teaching workload is intensive and can be stressful so you have to prioritise making time for yourself. As an ECT you do have more free periods than other full-time teachers (additional 10% off the timetable). For me this amounts to 5 hours of Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time over the course of a week. Apart from planning, marking and tending to the constant to-do list, this is also useful time to meet with your ECT mentor. My weekly meetings have been invaluable – my maths mentor pops in to observe me teaching once a week and gives me targets to work on from Steplab (Steplab is the online CPD equivalent of Pebblepad - but nicer). These targets or “Steps” are based on the ECT Framework and are designed to support and develop your teaching practice. They are quite bite sized so are easy to assimilate into lessons and you receive feedback specifically related to that aspect of your teaching. I have found that they can be helpful reminders of little things which make a difference or encourage you to experiment and try things you wouldn’t normally. Focussing on smaller elements of my practice has also helped me take a more objective view of my work - not to get bogged down in blind behaviour management and forget about pedagogy - but to keep on refining my lessons. Sometimes my mentor is not able to physically observe a lesson I’d like him to. In these instances I record myself on the school video camera. This was horrible at first (do I really sound / look like that?!) but it has actually been a fantastic way to see how students experience my teaching – what works and what could improve (and who is not doing any work seen from a different angle). I wholly recommend it! Other than meeting your mentor once a week there is online CPD to complete on Steplab which takes around 30 minutes.

Looking back, my year at Huntington has had ups and downs. There have been days when I wanted to go home and cry and others where I had a real sense of success and of making a difference.

Overall, it has been a blast - no two days are the same and nowhere is more full of life than a school. I have just seen my timetable for next year and met my new year 7 form. I am looking forward to not being the newbie.

Anne Vogel-Smith - MFL Mentor

A highlight from your mentoring experience?
When I could see an ITT’s practice shifting to a real understanding of an aspect in the teaching profession (pace, relationship, authority, confidence, enjoyment, progression...)

What piece of advice do you have for our cohort as they become ECTs?
Be brave!
What a fantastic year!

BY LAUREN ARKSEY
GEOGRAPHY TEACHER, ARCHBISHOP HOLGATE'S SCHOOL

“It's incredibly surreal that I am sat writing this at the end of my first ECT year, considering this time last year I was writing in this same newsletter as a trainee!

The days at school are so fast paced it is a rare occasion to actually be afforded time to reflect, but looking back, what a fantastic year it has been! As a PGCE student, I struggled to imagine how I would fit in as my own person without the crutch of host teachers and mentors, but those daunting days in September feel like a lifetime ago.

A year in, I have achieved so much, with highlights being planning trips to Flamborough Head, taking Y7 tree planting, taking over the school allotment and working alongside a fabulous department who support me every step of the way. Being able to grow my own teaching practice, whilst seeing the progress of my students is a reward that I know I couldn't find in any other job. Despite the challenges and the difficult days, I can't wait for September to come back round, ready for another extraordinary year.”

PGCE to ECT: Celebration, collaboration and reflection

BY ANNABEL RICHARDSON
ENGLISH TEACHER, THIRSK SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Transitioning from a trainee to an ECT last September was simultaneously exciting and daunting. Knowing that I would have autonomy in my own classroom with my own classes felt fulfilling but certainly came with its anxieties. What if the students notice it’s my first post? Will they accept me? To any of the 2022/23 PGCE cohort reading, I can reassure you that feelings of imposterism disappear quickly as you adapt to your new school and start building rewarding relationships with staff and students.

Regarding these reflections, I recently visited the current PGCE English cohort to discuss my first year as an ECT. Whilst I shared my experience and advice, I also learned a lot myself, noting how well the PGCE prepares cohorts and how teaching is a profession where your approaches are constantly reshaped through reflection.
This visit was truly a ‘full circle’ moment, reminding me about the importance of camaraderie and how this transitioned from a cohort of trainees to a department of colleagues during my first year. As I drove back to school after the visit, I realised how much I had achieved already in just one year. I then felt excited for the current cohort, anticipating what might be in store for them as ECTs. I am very thankful my tutors allowed me to return and reflect.

I will now summarise the general content of my presentation so that others may learn from my reflections.

**What am I entitled to as an ECT?**

As an ECT, you are allocated a mentor who (in your first year) you meet on a weekly basis. My mentor, an experienced teacher at Thirsk School and Sixth Form College, has been invaluable; they’ve helped me develop my practice but most importantly, they’ve been a supportive friend. I have been given tailored advice following frequent yet short observations which have encouraged my confidence, teaching me to celebrate my accomplishments.

Alongside a mentor, your school will have an ECF tutor who conducts assessment points against the teacher standards. Formal assessment points only happen mid-way and at the end of the academic year. Personally, I felt self-assured when approaching these assessment points, referring to the routines I used during training (lesson planning proformas) and reminding myself that I am a qualified individual receiving critical feedback to aid my development.

Your school will also register you with an ECF provider so that you can access online and in-person seminars to recap and expand upon existing knowledge.

**My year in review: Top tips**

- **Utilise your department** – socialise with your colleagues, gain advice and trade your resources.
- **Keep asking questions** – reach out when you need help, make connections, clarify uncertainties.
- **Personalise** – embrace your preferred routines, change displays when you’re ready, incorporate your personality in all you do.
- **Perfectionism is overrated** – figure out urgent non-negotiables, set boundaries, delegate when necessary.
- **Always leave time for fun** – reinforce relationships with students through fun activities, be kind to yourself, instill a love for learning.
York Students in Schools: YSIS Plus Workshops

BY LEANNE SHAW
YSIS VOLUNTEERING PROJECT OFFICER, CAREERS AND PLACEMENTS

For almost 30 years, our York Students in Schools (YSIS) programme has connected student volunteers from the University of York with local schools, to help make a difference to the lives of young people in York. Around 600 students each year support teaching and learning through a wide range of placements and projects with 55 host schools and nurseries. In 2022/23 we have placed students in roles such as Classroom Assistants, EAL Support Assistants and Extra Curricular Club Coaches.

We are incredibly grateful for the invaluable support of the PGCE Team at York, who play a vital role in the programme by equipping volunteers with essential knowledge and skills through their training sessions.

Recently, the PGCE Team extended their support to our YSIS Plus Workshops, which were designed specifically for student volunteers interested in pursuing teaching or related career paths.

The YSIS Plus Workshops covered a diverse range of topics, including:
- Effective Lesson Planning
- Formative Assessment Techniques
- Behaviour Management
- Supporting Pupils with SEND
- Supporting Pupils with EAL
- The Challenges Facing Young People
- Starting a Career in Teaching
- The Effects of Covid on Education in York

As well as the sessions delivered by the PGCE Team, we also had YSIS Plus workshops delivered by The Island, experienced SENDCos and other educational experts around York. Our next YSIS Plus workshops will be running in April 2024, please get in touch if you’d be interested in delivering one of these sessions.

York Students in Schools is delivered by the Student Volunteering Team in Careers and Placements. If you would like any further information, or wish to get involved, please contact ysis@york.ac.uk.
I have worked part-time as a CA Tutor on the PGCE course, while also teaching part-time in the MFL department of a large comprehensive school in York. I have taught for 39 years in total in various roles including as a classroom teacher, a Subject Leader for German and Spanish and a Year Leader in KS3 (all at the same time at one point!)

Working in a school, as PGCE trainees experience straightaway, makes you part of a like-minded, enthusiastic, resourceful and supportive team of professionals. I have had exactly the same experience here at York University.

PGCE Colleagues (who quickly became friends) could not have been more welcoming and supportive to me and could not be more passionate about preparing trainees for their careers in teaching. I have also had the pleasure of meeting and working with extremely dedicated professional tutors, mentors and host teachers in many of our partner schools who support our trainees brilliantly.

The trainees who I have been privileged to work with, not only in MFL, but in all curriculum areas, have always had boundless levels of enthusiasm, energy and commitment which has served them very well as they became confident teachers. When visiting trainees, it was also lovely to meet trainees who had secured first (and sometimes second) posts in our partner schools and had really settled into teaching.

Retirement has not fully beckoned yet, as I will still be teaching some PGCE Curriculum Area sessions on the MFL PGCE course and will be continuing to teach groups in my current school in the next academic year.
Goodbye from Anne

BY ANNE SCOTT
SCIENCE CA ASSOCIATE TUTOR

When Vic asked me to write something for the newsletter as I step down from PGCE tutoring, I was about to say no when it got me thinking and made me realise that I have been incredibly lucky working here at York.

I joined the university after completing a science PhD, working in conservation for three years, and teaching for 10 years in a large comprehensive.

In 2000 I joined the University of York Science Education Group to work on the Salters-Nuffield Advanced Biology project, this involved developing the specification for a new A level course, commissioning and editing the course textbooks and online resources, and running teacher CPD courses. After editing the second edition I went back to teaching part-time for a while and had the opportunity to start tutoring on the PGCE course alongside curriculum development. Going back into the classroom after a break was invaluable in the PGCE role giving me a clear insight into what a trainee teacher experiences and the support that they need.

It has been a pleasure working with PGCE colleagues, trainees and mentors, seeing individual trainees blossom after some targeted guidance, and working with the whole science cohort in university sessions. I will particularly remember mastering online teaching and virtual school visits during the pandemic, plus the amazing resilience and undaunted enthusiasm those trainees (and mentors) showed in transitioning between the classroom, to online and back again. I will particularly remember the fieldwork session with a virtual trip to the seaside which worked well (I thought so anyway!).

The experience with trainees and curriculum development fed into lots of other rewarding opportunities, for example working with UYSEG colleagues to run a science education CPD course in York for teachers from China, and a return visit to lead workshops at the Chinese Association for Science Education annual conference. I will certainly never forget eating hairy crabs and fish lips, or karaoke at the conference dinner.

Throughout my time here at York, I have been exceptionally fortunate to work with outstanding colleagues. A huge thank you to all the trainees I have had the privilege to work with, their hard work, commitment and enthusiasm is inspiring.
I will miss visiting schools and working with our fabulous mentors who give their time so generously. It is always lovely when visiting current trainees to see the progress of the numerous trainees that have gone on to work in partner schools.

As I step down from PGCE and enjoy a more relaxed flexible life (no big plans yet) there is one thing I would impress on the next cohort of trainees, good organisation and communication are key – don’t let a small worry fester, and if you’re not sure what to do, ask.

**Paul Wakeling**

As the new academic year begins, the Department of Education undergoes a leadership transition, as Paul Wakeling steps down from his position as the head of the department. Here Paul reflects on his tenure and shares his experiences collaborating with the PGCE team. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Paul for his unwavering support and invaluable encouragement throughout his time in the role.

In footballing circles, it is said that it is better for a manager to be lucky rather than good. Looking back over the past few years as Head of the Department of Education, filled with a global pandemic, the worst industrial relations in education for years and constant waves of policy change in ITT, I might consider that I have been a bringer of bad luck. But I actually feel very lucky in many ways – lucky to have a great set of colleagues working on our PGCE programme, a committed set of mentors and supporters in our partner schools, and (touching wood as I write) no Ofsted visit!!!

I’m vicariously proud of what PGCE colleagues and students have achieved in the face of all that has been thrown at them these last few years. I have a close connection to secondary schools through my daughters (Archbishop Holgate’s School) and wife (drama and supply in almost all of York’s secondary schools) so I’ve been able to see things from both sides how hard it has been for everyone in the sector, ITT included. This insight was supplemented by a fly-on-the-wall visit to Joseph Rowntree School with Helen Granger to see a placement in action – highly recommended!

I hope I’ve been able successfully to advocate for the value of university-based teacher training both in the University of York and outside of it. I’m proud that we have added Geography to our secondary portfolio, and looking forward to a new course to train primary teachers coming to fruition in the near future.
Welcome to our new Co-Heads

BY KATHRYN ASBURY & VANITA SUNDARAM

We're excited to be taking over as Co-Heads of the Department of Education from 1st October, and to be working more closely with all of you.

One of our first privileges - slightly before we take up the reins - will be to welcome our 2023-24 cohort of PGCE students. Our main message to them will be that they are in exceptionally good hands. We know they will be surrounded by support and expertise from our fabulous PGCE team and from our equally fabulous partner schools. We are grateful to you for everything you have done, and everything you continue to do, to make us so confident in delivering that message.

There have been some exciting developments this year, including a growing research partnership between the Department and partner schools and we're hoping that will continue to blossom. We also know that the climate for recruiting and retaining teachers is tough right now, and the policy landscape not always friendly. We will work to support you in navigating that climate to the very best of our ability and will be governed by our five core values: fairness, respect, inclusivity, compassion and high standards.

We're looking forward to it! And we wish Paul the very best and thank him for six years of fabulous leadership. Wishing you all a peaceful and happy summer!

Mike Jory

BEST OF LUCK TO MIKE WHO RETIRES FROM HIS CURRENT ROLE, AS CITY OF YORK EARLY CAREER INDUCTION APPROPRIATE BODY LEAD. HERE MIKE REFLECTS ON HIS WORK WITH THE PGCE OVER THE YEARS.

Having worked in York since 1983 I have had a long relationship with the University of York. This started when I was a MFL teacher at Huntington Secondary School before I then moved to Canon Lee (now Vale of York) in 1990 to be Subject Leader.

During my teaching career I have worked with multiple ITT students when they've been on placement in schools and I have always been impressed by the calibre of the students and the fantastic support offered to both them and mentors by University colleagues. In fact one of the most interesting things for me in my current role supporting ECTs is the number of ex University of York PGCE students I meet in schools across the region often in positions of responsibility! However it’s disconcerting when you talk to someone and discover that they're in their mid 50s which is one of the reasons that I'm retiring next year after 41 years!
The quality of the support and training from both the University and colleagues in schools is incredible and when I talk to friends in the non teaching world I always say that teachers are better prepared than ever to enter the profession now.

Obviously my main focus at the moment is overseeing ECTs during the 2 year induction period. I can honestly say that ECTs who have had support from the University of York are well prepared for the rigours and challenges of day to day teaching. Their readiness is often evident in the end of year ITT sessions that I help deliver with colleagues from Pathfinder Teaching School Hub when questions I would never thought of asking at that age or stage of my career are posed by students!

Celebrating 60 Years

In honour of the University of York's 60th anniversary, we reached out to our vibrant community of PGCE staff, school colleagues, friends, and alumni to bring you a captivating collection of their remarkable contributions and cherished memories from the past years, highlighting the enduring legacy of the PGCE program.

From Feeding Ducks to Nurturing Educators

BY JILL LAVENDER, FIRST POST TUTOR, UOY PGCE

Sometime last century I was an undergraduate, new to the north of England, based in Wentworth College (in the olden days it was not just post-grads), naively feeding cornflakes from my ground-floor window to eager and charming ducks.

I’ve learned masses since then. Firstly, UoY ducks can definitely count (they could pick my window from a row of others to hammer with their beaks at all hours. Nightmare). Secondly, it’s brilliant to live in York/North Yorkshire (I never went back). Thirdly, producing new teachers is something UoY does best.
I have lived elsewhere but returned to York when I had children, and ended up teaching English at Fulford School where I was also Professional Tutor and ECT Co-ordinator.

People could say mine hasn't been the most adventurous, globe-trotting life, but to watch how pupils AND teachers develop their expertise is continually challenging and enriching: SO MUCH happens in such a short time! And every year is different.

I'm ridiculously proud of the new teachers who emerge from this course and go on to achieve so much. Many become mentors themselves, some work in Initial Teacher Training, developing the next generations of much-needed teachers.

The course itself has evolved responsively to the changing education world and it has been a privilege to be a part of that. Earlier THIS century I was a PGCE Partnership Advisor for a year (avoided ducks but distracted by the famous black swans who then lived near the Education buildings). I visited schools and supported mentors, helped to redesign the interview process and loved being part of the PGCE team at first hand.

By the time Covid struck I was teaching part-time; I was able to carry out online PGCE visits, assignment marking and zoom interviewing. Elsewhere, the staff and trainees adapted with amazing determination to the virtual world. My daily walks included Campus West: strangely bereft of humans but apparently ruled by Long Boi (if you know, you know).

Time trotted on and, retired from school life, I now pick my way through the geese (!) to help interview PGCE candidates, and I'm the First Posts Tutor. Trainees can contact me at any time and we prepare for applications and interviews on a one-to-one basis. It is such a thrill to hear of each successful outcome: another fully-fledged* entrant to the teaching profession.

*Sorry, it just had to be done
From Herriot's Inspiration to Teacher Training: My Journey in Yorkshire

BY HEATHER SHERMAN
UOY PGCE COHORT 2010/11

Reading the books of James Herriot as a teenager inspired me to want to study in Yorkshire, and I completed my undergraduate degree in history, MA in medieval history and PGCE in Secondary history at the University of York. Paula Mountford led the history PGCE at the time, and her support and modelling of great teaching still influences my teaching every day. A standout memory of the PGCE was a whole school issues lecture by Professor Kris Kyriacou who slowly removed layers of clothing from the top half of his body throughout the lecture to reveal a key message on the back of a t-shirt. I can’t remember the topic of the lecture or the message on the t-shirt, but the humour and warmth he created through the session was a masterclass in how to engage and interact with students.

My first post was at Sherburn High School where I taught history between September 2011 and August 2014. I taught across KS3, KS4 and KS5 for the three years that I was there, and it was a wonderful school to start my teaching career with an incredibly supportive staff team. The challenges of working in a smaller school were that not all my hours could be made up of teaching history. Gaps were filled teaching other subjects including religious studies, BTEC work skills and, at one point, year 11 girls PE!

Between August 2014 and August 2015, I went to work for a national charity, IntoUniversity, as an education worker. It wasn’t a teaching post but involved working with schools to support students from a widening participation background to raise aspirations and support them with progression to university and work. We ran after school support and partnered with local primary and secondary schools to deliver workshops to support students academically and in building their aspirations. The impact we had in the local community was wonderful to see and gave students life chances and opportunities they would not have otherwise had access to.

In August 2015 I started working at York College. I taught A Level history and Level 3 Access to Humanities (history) full time between 2015 and 2021. One of the huge joys of this was the ability to teach my subject specialism full time at a higher level, with autonomy over specification and curriculum design. This autonomy also created challenge, with a lot of time needed to dedicate to planning and ensure my subject knowledge was comprehensive across many different modules. I also taught adults on the L3 access course.
This was equally as rewarding as teaching A Level but came with different challenges including supporting learners coming back to formal education, often after a long break. I have supported trainee teachers in many different capacities since I started teaching both as a mentor and through delivering subject specific and wider CPD.

In August 2021 I was appointed Centre Manager for Initial Teacher Education at York College, where I now run the Cert Ed/ PGCE in Lifelong Learning, validated by the University of Huddersfield. Alongside this I still teach some A Level History. Being a teacher educator is certainly a highlight of my career so far – it is a true privilege to train teachers and support them in the first stages of their journey to becoming a teacher.

I have many great memories of my PGCE teaching over a period of about 40 years at York. My PGCE teaching started in 1979 and ended when I retired a few years ago in 2018. One of the great highlights for me was teaching a one-week induction programme with my then colleague Norman Rea at the very start of their PGCE programme at York. We tried to be as entertaining and as innovative as possible to indicate how learning can be experienced in a variety of ways that enhances active engagement, although I have been amazed at how many of our PGCE alumni still recall my striptease act that revealed key aspects of effective teaching.

I have always felt that teaching the PGCE students was a privilege for me and I am delighted that we were able to have so many laughs together.
Rachel Hoyle

UOY PGCE COHORT 2007/8

My PGCE training followed a year of being a Cover Supervisor in a local Secondary School. I felt because of this experience I wouldn't find the leap into teaching too great, but nothing prepared me for the responsibility of actually being the one in control. My time at York was really excellent. The training was thorough and well taught, my placement schools were very different and equally challenging but most of all I enjoyed the university taught sessions and getting to know others on the course. The cohort were a great bunch and the tutor at the time, Paula, was fantastic and really inspirational.

I worried I wouldn't find job in the summer, but after three unsuccessful interviews I was offered one in North Lincolnshire, near my home town. It was a fantastic place where I learned so much. Alongside my specialism I taught subjects I hadn't trained for and my department didn't have a single lesson plan I could look at. Despite this, I worked hard and I loved it. My colleagues were brilliant which, in my opinion, is what makes a great teaching job. In my second year I was lucky enough to able to organise a Year 11 GCSE trip to New York and Washington DC, which we did two years running. Many students at the school hadn't been abroad before so it was a real moment for us. I couldn't believe my luck. In my final year I became the school Literacy Co-ordinator, my first taste of being part of ‘whole school’ initiatives.

My next school was in South West London. It’s hard being a new face no matter how experienced you are. Luckily, things went well. I became Head of Department. Being able to shape a subject and have overall control was a great feeling. I then spent some time as the Head of Humanities and learned a lot about managing people. My last role was as a Lead Practitioner, a great role if you feel your strengths are in the academic rather than the pastoral areas in schools. Here, among other responsibilities, I worked with trainee and newly qualified teachers and loved it!

Sophie Lockett

UOY PGCE COHORT 2018/19

I graduated from the PGCE in 2019, and it feels as though my career has been a complete whirlwind since then. Facing the task of online teaching during a pandemic six months into a new career was certainly a challenge, but since then I have had so many amazing opportunities to challenge myself and make a difference. My proudest achievement will always be the way in which I participated in the replanning of a Key Stage 3 curriculum because of the way it enabled us as a department to introduce diversity into our teaching and do justice to a decolonised approach to history.
Along with this, I took charge of embedding local history into our lessons, which led to our students being given the opportunity to research and present their own work to the historical society which runs in our town. This summer, my students will be presenting a talk on the impact of the Windrush Generation in our region. Witnessing them become confident, self-assured historians has overwhelmed me with pride.

These opportunities gave me the confidence I needed to apply to a fellowship with the Historical Association, which became the best professional development I have yet completed. Not only did it make me appreciate how lucky we are to have such a thriving subject association, but it re-ignited a passion for historical research that I had lost along the way since I entered the classroom.

I cannot imagine how different my life would be if I hadn’t completed my PGCE at the University of York. Looking back, I realise how lucky I was to have learned from some of the very best, and to have been supported along the way by some of the kindest, most intelligent, and inspiring people in Helen and Ruth. Even if they did convince me to walk around Whitby dressed as a nun for the sake of engaging primary school children in their local history.

Yes, the quality of training I received was absolutely outstanding, but it is the people I met along the way that have been the most important outcome of the course. They have shaped me, inspired me, motivated me, picked me up on the worst of days, and ultimately, became my family, especially those I inadvertently started a small and very quickly contained fire with one evening before we held a school trip for an entire year group of children.

Ann Gannon
FORMER CA LEAD UOY MATHEMATICS PGCE

I became the Curriculum Area Leader for the Mathematics PGCE programme in the autumn of 2003, after having a varied career teaching Maths in secondary schools and other settings, and retired at the end of the summer in 2014. Looking back on my career in Maths education as a whole, I think those final 10 years were perhaps the most fulfilling and rewarding, although not without their difficulties at times.

The first term in the role was, to put it mildly, a baptism of fire. New to the position and, at the time, the sole member of the Mathematics PGCE team, Ofsted decided to visit to inspect the course. My thoughts on Ofsted – well better not to share those here – but the course, my first cohort of trainees and I survived to tell the tale. Some good things did come out of that inspection, for example the introduction of the Professional Enrichment programme for the summer term to enhance trainees’ experiences, giving them the opportunity to undertake activities which the main programme had not. An initiative which was adopted course wide.
The autumn, spring and early summer terms were without doubt a challenge, even for the most dedicated trainees. On the other hand, the final weeks of the summer term gave the soon to be qualified teachers the opportunity to shine and demonstrate their confidence in their role as professionals. The STEM days which various cohorts prepared for different schools from Skipton in North Yorkshire to South Leeds were a testament to the growth in their capacity to inspire reluctant Maths learners to find enjoyment in Maths related tasks.

Highlights – our end of year days out

- the year Paula and I told the History and Maths trainees – yes we were going to have a trip out!.......to York Cemetery
- the visits in subsequent years, again with the History trainees, to Fountains Abbey
- visits to York Sculpture Park
- and the memorable day out in Scarborough (in the rain if my memory serves me well)

all with the intention of finding how to incorporate Maths activities into a fun day out.

Happy days!
What a pleasure and a privilege to be the course leader for History, WSI and the Director of Initial Teacher Education at the University of York. To have had the opportunity to contribute to the development of around 1000 teachers and to collaborate with hundreds of talented teachers and schools across our region.

I was professionally ‘Made in York’: completing my PGCE in 1990, teaching at Huntington School, completing my MA in Education at the University of York, working as a Teaching and Learning Consultant for York LA and leading on Teacher Training at the University of York! I look back on my career in Teacher Education with a great sense of pride.

I always shared my story of the importance of two primary school teachers: Miss Howell and Miss Adams. Giants in my life, who told me to expect more and demand more. It is always important to remember to thank a teacher.

The PGCE is about being part of a team, of having the opportunity to make a difference and to contribute to individual lives and changing the world. What a powerful, challenging and uplifting profession. I also reflect upon the creativity, the fun and friendships that are forged on a PGCE. I think back with great happiness at the individuals I have met and collaborated with. I will never forget my own PGCE at York, when the prizes for an end of placement quiz at Fulford School, were potatoes taken by my fellow trainee from his accommodation block. The surprise on that child’s face when awarded a bag of King Edwards for coming first in a Roman history quiz can still make me laugh.

I now lead an international MA programme working with teachers and aspiring educators from across the globe. I use my PGCE learning, my experiences and my passion for teaching and learning to help international teachers reflect, challenge and create ideas, issues and approaches.

It is happy big birthday to York and to me this year. For me it is a time to reflect upon what I have contributed to and to sharpen my focus on what I can still contribute to in the final chunk of my career. My current focus is on Education for Sustainable Development and Climate Crisis Education. Children born this year will live to see the start of the next century. As educators it is key that we reflect upon this and listen to the voices of this generation.

Happy Birthday York PGCE!
2023/24 Trainee Cohort

As we say goodbye and good luck to our 2022/23 cohort we prepare to welcome the next group of eager trainees in September.

Embracing Change

BY RACHEL KENNADY
FUTURE ENGLISH TRAINEE 2023/24

It has been a slower journey to the PGCE course for myself, than most. I am coming to the University of York PGCE course after a decade spent managing hospitality businesses; I have loved my hospitality career - the fast pace, the focus on people, the need to identify weaknesses, adapt and grow the business. It has been a fulfilling and successful career for me.

However, regardless of how much I was enjoying my job there was always a bright little post-it note on the noticeboard in my mind saying ‘This wasn’t your plan’. Covid, and the accompanying lockdowns, provided me with the time and space to fully consider ‘The Plan’ and I remember telling my friends over a coffee, sat outside shivering in a cold cafe garden, that I had decided to go back to university and pursue a career in teaching. Their delightful cheerful reactions confirmed I’d made the right choice, and all of the lovely, kind and supportive people that I have had contact with from the University of York have greatly raised my hopes and my excitement for the year ahead.

I am excited to be surrounded by dedicated and motivated like-minded people as I train. Throughout my working life I’ve deeply valued the relationships I’ve had with my colleagues and, as I embark on this new chapter, I’m excited to develop new relationships with passionate and enthusiastic fellow trainees, tutors and mentors. I’m looking forward to encouraging and supporting each other through the course, and beyond.

Looking beyond our PGCE course, I am thrilled by the thought of a career where professional development is ongoing and so valued. I’m already excited for the Professional Enrichment placement at the end of the PGCE programme, which I hope will be an amazing opportunity to immerse ourselves in an area of personal interest.
It would be false to suggest that I do not feel any apprehension changing my career – Will I be any good at this? Have I got anything special to offer? Do I know my subject well enough now? But, everyone I have spoken to at the University have been so encouraging and, after considering the skills from my current career I realised my organisation, time-keeping, ability to develop relationships, ability to manage people, ability to stay calm under pressure etc. are all key for a good teacher. Now, I cannot wait to start learning how to apply those skills for the classroom.

I am convinced I’ve made the right decision and I’m eager for September to get here. Between now and then, I’ll be grateful for saying goodbye to an old career and reading a lot to prepare for an exciting new one.

Pursuing a Fulfilling Career in Education

BY SAM AMOS
FUTURE HISTORY TRAINEE 2023/24

Over the past three years of my undergraduate degree, I have often contemplated what different career avenues I would like to take in the near future. Although to begin with I did not have a precise profession in mind, I knew since college that I wanted to have a career where I felt I was making a positive and fulfilling difference to society and the people I worked with. Having taken part in the York Students in Schools scheme, in addition to gaining some experience within the administrative field of education policy, I quickly realised that teaching was a career where I would find such satisfaction.

I recognise that the step towards taking my PGCE in History will be full of unknowns and, although I am anxious, this makes me all the more excited for the year ahead. Whilst I am very keen to learn the process behind becoming a successful teacher, I am also mindful of how this course will teach me a number of other things. To mention a few; how will I enhance my academic understanding of History during this course? In what ways will I develop skills such as effective communication, listening, and management within the profession? What will I learn about my personal strengths and limitations during teaching?

I believe that teaching a humanities subject will help me find the answers to all these questions. Having studied at the University of York, I am reassured by the previous guidance and support from staff that I have received, that this PGCE course will be positively challenging and will encourage me to keep going beyond my comfort zone. I know that this is just the first step in my teaching career, but I eagerly look forward to the confidence and professional skills that this PGCE will help me to develop and carry forward in my years as a teacher.
Igniting Passion for Languages

BY RAGHIBA AHMED
FUTURE MFL TRAINEE 2023/24

Embarking on my PGCE journey to teach German and Spanish, I am filled with excitement and readiness for the challenges ahead. My aspiration is to inspire and ignite a love for language learning in my future students.

Having initially pursued full-time work after graduation, leveraging my language skills in sectors such as finance and technology, I recognised the immense value of languages along my career path. Witnessing first-hand how languages open doors and foster connections, I have full confidence in my decision to become a teacher and provide these opportunities to young learners.

I am eager to share my love for German and Spanish with young minds. I believe language learning encompasses more than grammar and vocabulary; it fosters cultural understanding and promotes open-mindedness. I feel this on a personal level, as I grew up speaking Urdu, German and English and always felt like I never became an expert in any of them! As a language teacher, I hope to inspire students to explore new horizons and embrace diversity.

With the guidance of experienced mentors and collaborating with like-minded trainees, I am confident that I will be able to overcome any challenges I face. I am determined to emerge from this experience as the best version of myself, fully equipped to embody the teacher I aspire to be.

Through my PGCE course, I hope to develop and learn pedagogical skills and strategies to effectively teach and inspire young minds. I am confident that the course will equip me with the knowledge and guidance to create engaging and interactive learning environments, instilling a love for languages. I know that there is still much to learn, I embrace the journey ahead and look forward to the opportunity to develop as a lifelong learner alongside my peers and students.
We would like to thank all colleagues across our Partnership for their continued support and ongoing commitment to the development of our future teachers. We would also like to thank all our guest speakers and presenters who have helped to make the PGCE such a rich experience.

Finally, a big thank you to all those who contribute to our extensive interviewing programme. Without all these colleagues we would not have such a collegiate and collaborative Partnership.