

## Guidance for Host Teachers of Trainees - Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. How “active” and “visible” should my trainee be when they first start coming into my lessons?

This is something you will need to agree in advance with your trainee so that you are both clear on protocols and are comfortable working together. In general it would seem a good idea to introduce your trainee by title and surname to the class from the beginning and assign them a specific role that they understand and the class also recognises; this signals that you value the trainee and they are an active participant in the teaching and learning process. Some examples might be:

- To support a small group of pupils who have additional needs – EAL, reticent students, pupils who present specific behaviour challenges etc.
- To scribe key learning points during a class and/or group discussion
- To conduct a role-play/demonstration with the class teacher

### 2. In addition to teaching the class, what other activities can I ask trainees to do which would contribute positively to their training?

If/When trainees do have a more observing role in your classroom, it would be particularly helpful to ask them to look out for particular things (e.g. how you give praise and how often; how you handle wrong or incomplete answers from pupils etc.) as sometimes trainees, particularly at the start of their ITT year, are not sure what teachers are doing so that learning occurs and how or why they are managing learning and behaviour in the way they are doing. Following up their observations explicitly with them via a brief professional discussion would be excellent, although we fully understand that time is always an issue!

Some trainees in the past have found it particularly helpful to deliver a lesson planned by the host teacher or to plan a lesson which the class teacher delivers. This can work for different people in different ways and at different points of the training year.

Try to involve trainees as soon as possible in marking and assessing pupils’ work as this will help them get to know pupils as learners. This knowledge should then feed into their lesson planning helping them to pitch lessons better. Show and explain to trainees how you mark pupil work rather than assume they will just pick it up. Ask them to ghost mark a handful of pupil assessments and then discuss with them, confirming and challenging their judgements as appropriate.

### 3. When should the trainee actually start teaching my students?

This is something for you, the trainee and the trainee’s school mentor to decide upon together through ongoing discussion. The mentor will have drawn up the trainee’s timetable carefully and will have a view on how the trainee’s teaching commitment should be staggered. There are key expectations that the mentor will have factored in i.e.

- that in placement 1 the trainee will have planned and taught a minimum of 15 full lessons by the end of the Autumn Term
- that in placement 1 the trainee will be teaching 50% of a teacher’s timetable by the start of February half term
- that in placement 2 the trainee will rapidly build up to teaching 50% of a teacher’s timetable
- that in the second half of placement 2 the trainee will be teaching between 75% and 80% of a teacher’s timetable

Within these broad expectations there is the opportunity for a trainee's teaching commitments to be bespoke to their individual needs and kept under constant review.

#### **4. Should the trainee only teach parts of lessons to begin with?**

This is something for you as the teacher to discuss with the trainee and with the school mentor. The dynamics and needs of your particular class may also have a bearing upon this. It is certainly possible and quite common for trainees to deliver just a segment of a lesson in the first instance e.g. the starter or plenary.

#### **5. Should I expect a lesson plan from a trainee?**

Absolutely! You need to clarify expectations with the mentor who has ideally clarified this with the school's professional tutor, but it is helpful if all host teachers working with a trainee have the same expectations. Lesson planning is a key part of a trainee's professional learning and as host teacher you have a vital role to play. The trainee should supply you with a written lesson plan at least two **working** days in advance of the lesson so that you have the opportunity to look over it and give professional feedback. It is generally not acceptable for a trainee to send you a lesson plan over a weekend for a lesson they are teaching on Monday, however there may be exceptional circumstances where you have agreed to do this for the trainee. Trainees will expect feedback on lesson plans as part of their training so please do this. Trainees should give you a lesson plan, amended accordingly in the light of your feedback, at the start of any lesson they teach.

#### **6. What happens if I am concerned about the trainee's lesson plan or if they have not provided me with a plan in advance of the lesson?**

At the end of the day, the progress of the learners in your class is your responsibility and therefore your first consideration. If you are concerned about a trainee's lesson plan in terms of a lack of quality or they do not accept your proposed amendments or if you do not see a lesson plan with sufficient time beforehand to check its quality, you should feel able to take back the teaching of that lesson. If this happens, please inform the mentor as soon as possible so that the mentor, school professional tutor and university tutor are aware and can take appropriate action.

#### **7. What kind of written feedback am I expected to provide**

Your trainee should supply you with a blank copy of the lesson observation form at the start of each lesson. Trainees are required to have one formal lesson observation a week using the [Weekly Lesson Observation Form 23-24](#). We advise that you discuss in advance with your trainee whether they wish your lesson is to be a formal observation. If your lesson is not a formal observation then you may wish to use a different format to record feedback, for example in a notebook. Regardless of which form you use, please always sign and date your feedback as it is an ongoing, formal audit trail of evidence of the trainee's professional development. Copies of lesson feedback are uploaded by the trainee onto their PebblePad e-portfolio and are part of the evidence used on a weekly basis by the subject mentor in coaching discussions and in the weekly target setting process. School Professional Tutors, University Tutors, External Examiners and Ofsted Inspectors would have sight of lesson observation forms when scrutinising trainees' files.

The University of York's lesson observation pro-forma is designed focus on how the trainee impacts upon pupils' progress as this is the key measure of how someone is progressing as a teacher.

#### **How much and how often should I give written feedback to the trainee?**

We ask that you provide written feedback to the trainee as often as possible. Most host teachers do this every time they are in a lesson observing the trainee. Even if the trainee only teaches a segment of the lesson, it is possible, and indeed desirable to aid the trainee's reflection, for written feedback to be provided on just that segment.

## **8. Do I make links to the Core Content Framework in my written feedback?**

We ask trainees to make links to the CCF to help them consider your feedback in an active and reflective way, however we also ask that you as you observe and talk to the trainee about the lesson that you are mindful of the areas of the CCF. A summary of the Teachers' Standards is available on the [Weekly Lesson Observation Form 23-24](#).

### **Is it okay to write lesson feedback by hand?**

Absolutely! Please do not waste time afterwards typing up your feedback. Any time you have after the lesson would be much better spent in a professional discussion with your trainee.

## **9. Should I discuss the feedback with the trainee or is the written feedback sufficient?**

We would ask that you please have at least a brief professional discussion with the trainee and that the discussion is a dialogue so that the trainee feels actively involved in their own progress. We want, as we are sure you do too, for trainees to feel that you work **with** them. As part of the feedback, we would ask that you start by asking the trainee for their thoughts on the lesson – e.g. what went well and how they know it went well; what progress pupils made and how progress could be evidenced; what could be improved or done differently next time. It may well be that discussions cannot take place immediately after the lesson as you and/or the trainee may well have another lesson to go to or a meeting to attend, however we ask that professional discussions take place as soon as possible after the lesson to facilitate the trainee's self-reflection.

## **10. Should I be setting targets as part of my lesson observations and written feedback?**

No. Towards the end of the lesson observation form there are boxes which are for you to jot down things for the trainee to consider, but the formal target setting process is part of the weekly mentor meeting and a joint responsibility between trainee and mentor rather than host teacher. There would be just too many targets if after every lesson observation observers filled in targets! That is not to say that you are not contributing to the target setting process and the trainee's professional development – the idea is that mentors and trainees gather all of the lesson observation feedback from a week in school, sift through the wealth of information and draw out just 2 or 3 key issues as targets which will really help to move the trainee on professionally.

## **11. Who can I turn to for support if I have any concerns about my trainee?**

Ideally you should raise concerns directly with your trainee in the first instance via a professional conversation, however a key person in school from whom to seek additional support is the trainee's subject mentor. School professional tutors have responsibility for all trainees and mentors and are another source of professional support for you. University Tutors may also be able to help, although it is more likely that they liaise with mentors and professional tutors rather than with host teachers. All of the handbooks and forms used as part of our ITT course are available for you to view on the mentor's pages of our [website](#).

## **12. Should I ever leave the trainee alone to teach the lesson?**

This is something for you to decide in discussion with the trainee, the mentor and possibly the professional tutor as well as being mindful of any whole school requirements. Ultimately as class teacher you have responsibility for your pupils so you may prefer always to be present in lessons, however particularly towards the end of their training to help them make a confident start as an ECT, trainees may well benefit from being left in sole charge of the classroom. If your trainee is left alone with your class, they need to be clear about procedures for summoning assistance in the event of an accident or something else untoward occurring. If you are away from school because you are attending a course or ill, the trainee can still take your class, however the cover teacher must be available to support the trainee.