

ITE EYFS & Primary Newsletter: Start of Autumn Term 2023

Dear Partner,

We hope that you have all had a great summer break and returns to school / settings have been smooth and full of excited young faces!

This iteration of our newsletter aims to highlight strengths and developments made last academic year, how we take these ongoing foci forwards and other useful information from the University Of Cumbria.

Focus area of Newsletter (*Click each to take you direct to section)	Key actions for busy mentors	Discussed with UPT
Institute of Education, Arts and Society	For note- you are now part of a wider, more diverse link throughout the University of Cumbria.	
ITT Partnership for recommending award of QTS	For note: University of Cumbria to continue delivery of high-quality ITT from 2024. See announcement below.	
Continued mentor training / development...	Our mentor development continuum continues to grow with input in 3 core areas: (1) Initial (new) mentor training (skills); (2) bespoke input needed for UoC students- Understanding our ITT curriculum, assessment methods and setting a range of high-quality weekly targets; (3) Essential enhancement modules- this year has a focus as below...	
2023/24 Mentor training / development... 'Challenging disadvantage together'	For all mentors that have completed training during 21/22 or 22/23. Complete online training here (prior to student placements). BRAND NEW mentor development module focused on articulating Challenging disadvantaged and how your school / setting drives this. How can your student teacher understand your school context better?	
Placement feedback from students	Note strengths and core partnership foci. Action any findings for continued development with trainees this year- highlighted beneath feedback grids, in yellow boxes.	
Reminder: Target setting guidance	Additional resource to support SMART curriculum led targets.	
Full QA framework as outlined in partnership agreement.	To note how QA and role expectations feed improvements in partnership quality.	
Reminder: Ofsted Subject reviews as part of discussions with trainees-	For use alongside ITT curriculums and core content framework resources when target setting with student teachers.	
ITT placements 'offers'	If you would still like to offer any placements for this academic year click here ; or contact educationplacements@cumbria.ac.uk	

Institute of Education, Arts and Society:

As of August 1st 2023 the University of Cumbria have created a new combined Institute; merging existing provision (Education & Arts) and leaving space for portfolio development opportunities and innovation (Society)

This exciting new institute is led by Dr Ruth Harrison-Palmer, as Director.

We expect to see many cross-discipline projects forming over the next year showing where the University of Cumbria really can have impact for people, places and partnerships that exist, grow and develop over time.

Underway already are projects with the 'Cumbrian Award' scheme- looking at cultural aspiration; An ongoing set of discussions with [PRISM arts](#) will unlock potential for art specialists to work with young people across Cumbria; Our [PGCE \(Non QTS\)](#) continues to grow, bringing together education professionals from across the world to reflect on their approaches to education teaching & learning; finally our MA provision continues to grow with some focus on [English Literature](#) and sense of place in Cumbria (Wordsworth, Beatrix potter etc.) alongside our MA in [Education Professional Practice](#) that allows school/setting colleagues to develop high quality action research led insights into the quality of education provision in their own contexts.

We will keep you posted of further developments throughout the year...!

Cumbria and Warwick Universities become partners to provide high quality teacher education both regionally and nationally.

The University of Cumbria and the University of Warwick are entering into a new partnership to support the delivery of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), opening up exciting opportunities for the future training of teachers for the benefit of our region, young people, and communities. This partnership builds upon a long and rich legacy of teacher training at both Cumbria and Warwick universities. It will ensure the two universities continue to provide high-quality teachers and build upon and strengthen their contributions to teacher education both regionally and nationally. Current University of Cumbria students, including students who successfully applied for courses with the University of Cumbria beginning in the academic year 2023/24 will continue to have their qualifications accredited by the University of Cumbria until their completion. Students who begin their ITE with the University of Cumbria from 2024/25 will have their professional (Qualified Teacher Status) qualification accredited by the University of Warwick as a Department for Education accredited ITE provider, but their academic qualification - PGCE or BA (Primary Education) - will remain a University of Cumbria award. Together with our strong partnership working and our recent positive OFSTED report, we will continue to provide the very best experience for our teaching students both on campus and through our school partners.

Strengths and Areas of development for our ITE partnership:

As ever you contribute in such a strong way to a purposefully integrated curriculum experience for ITT trainees.

The strengths are clear to see at ever level within our partnership.

We would love below to share some of the successes born out in evaluation of ongoing QA and data from our provision; along with our current foci for development:

Strengths	Areas of Ongoing Development
2023 saw a successful Ofsted inspection that highlighted the real strengths of our ITT partnership...see below:	Mentor development (&training) remains an ongoing priority in our partnership. Ensuring compliance with national ITT criteria for 'training hours' for mentors. (page 33) We are also trialling new online modules and tracking mechanisms to make mentors development more flexible.
"Trainees benefit from well-structured curriculums, based on pertinent research, that are expertly delivered," "Course leaders have planned their curriculums with precision. Trainees learn how to teach their phase and subject well."	Continue to develop consistency of mentor's knowledge and understanding of ITT curriculum; further developing links to ensure subject specialists can work together to build on and enhance quality of subject curriculums.
"Trainees are very well prepared for teaching by this partnership. They learn to manage pupils' behaviour effectively and develop strategies to maintain a healthy work-life balance to make them ready for life in school."	Review our QA mechanisms within the overall framework to identify 'what works best' to assure leaders and show impact on trainee progress. (developing new online system- ready for 24/25)
"Trainees benefit from close working relationships between university staff and school leaders and mentors. There is a joined-up approach to delivering the curriculum. Communication between trainees, schools and tutors is strong."	Continue to focus on monitoring of student targets across the ITT and subject curriculum areas. Improving access to partnership wide 'live' data of student progress (weekly targets & reviews)
The report also underlined what makes our teacher training special, relevant and valuable to the education of our communities now and for future generations. A great underpinning of focus on Challenging Disadvantage Together.	

Student (placement) feedback: shows as ever the value our ITE students place in you, 'expert colleagues' (mentors) as part of their learning journey to become qualified teachers. A Huge THANK YOU for all that you continue to do to support ITE in our partnership. We felt it really important to share some of our early analysis to indicate the impact you have on ITT students. We also share some key foci for placements in this academic year:

Question	PG	UG	Commentary
The placement school provided good quality training & support which has enabled me to make progress towards the staged expectation	99%	92%	High quality mentoring continues to be a strength of the UoC ITE partnership
I was able to establish an effective working relationship with my Mentor.	99%	91%	Mentors quickly build and develop professional relationships with ITT students.
Your weekly meetings with your Mentor.	96%	89%	Ensuring that weekly reflection/feedback space is clear to ITT trainees. Clarify roles of lead mentors / class teachers where necessary. UPTs to check entitlement as part of QA touch points (address where necessary)
Verbal and written feedback on your teaching	96%	93%	Consistently high feedback from students on the value they place in feedback from mentors.
Your involvement in the "Weekly Review and target setting activities set out in the SPAR.	97%	92%	SPARs were designed to be a professional dialogue and recording tool between ITT trainees and mentors. This data confirms a consistent approach across our partnership.
The extent to which your mentor and other staff demonstrated and explained professional practice	97%	94%	Consistently high feedback from students on the value they place in seeing exemplary practice from mentors.
The extent to which your mentor was able to refer me to my ITT curriculum learning and the resources available through the university website	93%	92%	UPTs are monitoring this during QA touch points. Sampling of weekly reviews and targets has indicated successes. Good to see further in year improvement in satisfaction.

Areas to focus on:

- Continued focus to be given to creating space for professional reflection and dialogue about the ITT curriculum learnt by the students and how well they are enacting these bits of knowledge and skills. Weekly meetings with mentors really help students clear headspace for these discussions.
- Continued focus on working with ITT trainees to understand how planning and curriculum progression is developed should be a core focus in developing phase- as trainees start to take a greater lead in planning their own/ adapting school-based planning.
- We would like to see ITT students given opportunity to teach a range of foundation subjects on each placement. Lower scoring areas this last summer were History, MFL and music.
- Although students perceptions of focus on Challenging disadvantage together stayed above 90%, we recognised that there was a need to help formalise conversations in this domain of learning. The mentor training/development sessions this year will focus directly on this.

Snapshots of qualitative comments:

- Student teachers really value the ongoing dialogue about how they use current, relevant research to influence their practice. Here are some examples of reflections given!

PG Extending	UG Extending
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While working at my placement, I utilized various teaching techniques, and one of the most successful was scaffolding/modelling tasks for my pupils. Through this method, I provided support to help them become more skilled and independent learners. The goal of instruction is to enable students to build upon their existing knowledge and absorb new information. Scaffolding activities involve challenging tasks that are not beyond the student's capabilities with some guidance, allowing the teacher to monitor their progress.	Dweck growth mindset theory- this allows me to create a 'can do' learning environment. which includes high levels of motivation.
Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory & Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The development of an individual is the result of the complete 'ecology' of the child (consisting of biological, interpersonal, social, and cultural factors).	Play-based learning (Piaget, Montessori, Vygotsky) state that children learn best through child-initiated play and taking an active role.
Research on outdoor play and questioning following my two assignments for the course were extremely beneficial and had an impact on my teaching and practice	I utilised the behaviourism approach, in which learners have had a routine for each day as information was studied and positive reinforcement had been provided. Furthermore, the humanism approach was been utilised. The environment was created to meet students needs, helping them determine their own goals each day.

Please continue to explore the research students have used as part of their ITT curriculums- to be found on the Knowledge organisers as your dive through their curriculums ([in SPAR](#)), [CCF](#) core bibliography and [Ofsted subject review findings](#).

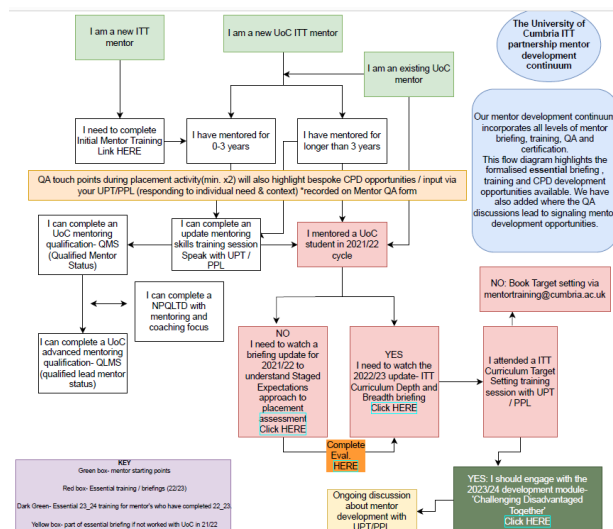
Student teachers continually reflect amazing comments about the standard of mentoring in schools- here are some examples:

PG Extending	UG Extending
My mentor was a resilient person that showed a lot of support for me when it was a very challenging time for both of us. Their biggest strength was in their calm demeanour and maintaining clear expectations for the class, promoting a setting of tolerance and kindness, even when children did not show this. Even so, MENTOR was persistent in setting expectations and calmly continued with lessons through those challenging times. All staff showed good practice in their professional behaviours around school, by showing immense support, kindness, and camaraderie with each other, myself included. As such, the staff's biggest strength was their ability to maintain an environment of support and motivation for those experiencing difficult days. I appreciate their help very much.	My school mentor was extremely effective in stating all expectations for each week. I was provided promptly with any logins for any schemes and useful online resources. Each week my mentor checked over my planning to ensure quality and my adaptations to target different ability levels in my class. My weekly review meetings were always useful and detailed, and allowed me to keep up a professional target setting mindset, to continually develop and improve my teaching skills and styles.
The whole schools philosophy is one of compassion, collaboration and learning. I am very sad to leave. MR MENTOR, my mentor ,was amazing! He allowed me the freedom to risk take in my teaching - obviously under his watchful eye! He introduced me to online school platforms and always supported me when I was trying out something new. He has given me the confidence to take control of the class and become reactive to the children's learning. The whole team, especially the Yr 3 team, have supported me through my extending placement and I cannot thank them enough.	They had high expectations from me and encouraged me to come out of my comfort zone by pushing me to do more. This helped me to develop as a teacher and become more confident. They gave me good advice and provided constructive criticism that I can reflect on and improve on.
My school mentor was flexible, communicable, provided feedback when I needed it in a way that helped me hear it. My UPT was always available when I needed it, and helped with any questions I had.	My mentor was able to help me build confidence in my teaching and develop a better understanding of planning and teaching considering the lack of opportunity for this on previous placements. My mentor also encouraged me to be creative and use my own behaviour management strategies within the classroom to help promote positive behaviour.

*Student teachers reflected that they welcome opportunities to see professionals across your schools and settings- please allow more of this!

*Student teachers reflected they would welcome more time to complete placement paperwork in dialogue with their mentors- particular focus on pupil profiles was requested!

Mentor Development: [Our mentor development programme](#) forms a continuum, ranging from centrally run formalised training programmes, to bespoke 1:1 meetings between mentor and university staff, and covers mentors with a range of experience, from those at the earliest stages of their mentoring journey, to those who have a little experience (and who may have received some training with the University of Cumbria or another institution some time ago) through to highly experienced mentors who have a wealth of skills but who may need an update on changes to paperwork and processes. The flowchart here outlines the varying options that a mentor should take part in.



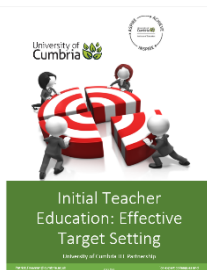
Mentor Briefing & Training Provision:

We have developed our mentor development / training curriculum into 3 core areas:

- (1) Initial mentor training- **for new mentors**. Focussing on mentoring and coaching skills, whilst incorporating UoC paperwork expectations and understating of our programme ITT curriculum.
- (2) Bespoke UoC ITT placement information- **for mentors who have not worked with us since 2021**. This includes input on 'how we assess placements', 'how to find the training student's ITT curriculum (depth and breadth) and use it to inform this assessment (formative) and finally how to set a range of pedagogic and subject focussed targets using the ITT curriculums.
- (3) Essential enhancement modules- **For all mentors who have completed stages 1& 2 (2023/24)**. Our exciting new, web-based development module; focussed on Challenging disadvantage together for 2023/24. Thinking about how you as a mentor articulate what this looks like in your school/setting and how we work with trainee teachers to have them understand their role in closing the gap in learning and supporting young people who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Reminder---Target setting guidance: * Additional, focussed guidance on setting targets linked to Staged Expectations and End Point Assessment

[CLICK HERE!](#)



Please take 5 mins to read through and use as part of ongoing target setting focus with trainee teachers.

Challenging disadvantage together ambitious curriculum strand of ITT programmes

A backbone of ambition within all ITE curriculums at the University of Cumbria. Please continue to work with all ITT students are asked to explore how disadvantage is challenged in each placement setting. Track PP children as part of pupil profiling and are explore how school/trust/regional approaches to dismantling disadvantaged are covered. [Now linked with mentor training materials.](#)

Full QA framework as outlined in Partnership Agreement:

Giving you better access to key documents such as our QA processes and reporting structures. Please review the linked document below and note how this links to all of the work you do in your role as mentor. Showing that your input does drive and help shape our continuous quality improvement. [Agreement \(cumbria.ac.uk\)](#)

Quality Assurance (QA) of placement activity in our ITT Partnership occurs across a number of themed approaches: [Quality Assurance Framework - Primary ITT](#)

- Mentor development continuum (mentor training and quality)
- Staged Expectations based on Programme (ITT) Curriculum development- using 6 core domains of ITT learning (ongoing 'assessment' on placement)
- Expert Colleague (Mentor) Coaching & Mentoring Feedback & Target development
- University Partnership Tutor (UPT) QA Visits

- End Point Assessment of Teacher Standards- and link with ECF
- Student Led process & Paperwork development (Student ownership of reflection and meetings with mentors)
- Stakeholder / External development & verification of quality

We focus on: What do we teach; How well is it taught; How do school-based learning and centre-based learning work together; and How well is it learnt.

Ofsted Subject Reviews as part of discussions with trainees: Within our [Effective Target Setting for ITE Trainees](#) we have highlighted the use of the [Ofsted curriculum research review](#) documents. These can be used alongside all of the other key resources when setting targets for trainees (Knowledge Organisers [in ITT curriculum], Core Content Framework resources, and the Ofsted reviews)

We continue to want to grow our range of resources for mentors – to support ITT students in understanding approaches to good quality teaching and learning in subject areas.

To this end, our subject teams will be approaching you this year to develop short, online e-resources for use across our partnership. If you feel that a particular subject or areas is strong in your school please let your UPT know and we can link you up with our subject teams here at UoC.

THANK YOU!

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact your UPT or Pat Freeman as below:

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University of Cumbria

Thank you as ever for your input to our partnership.

Institute of Education Leadership Team