Schools' Experiences of Hosting Trainees and Employing Newly Qualified Teachers

Research report

June 2019

CooperGibson Research

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Glossary

AB – appropriate body, responsible for the quality assurance and verification of NQT status

EAL – English as an Additional Language

BEd – Bachelor of Education

CPD – Continuing Professional Development

ECF - Early Career Framework (ECF)[1]

GDPR – General Data Protection Regulations

ITT - Initial Teacher Training

LA – Local Authority

MAT – Multi-Academy Trust

NCTL – National College of Teaching and Leadership

NPQs – National Professional Qualifications

NQT - Newly Qualified Teacher

Placement schools – the schools that work with a training provider in relation to ITT

PGCE – Postgraduate Certificate of Education

PPA – Planning, Preparation and Assessment

QR code – Quick Response code

QTS – Qualified Teacher Status

RQT – Recently Qualified Teacher (typically having two to five years' teaching experience)

SCITT – School-centred Initial Teacher Training

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

SLE – Specialist Leader in Education

SLT – Senior Leadership Team

TLR – Teaching and Learning Responsibility

Training provider/accredited ITT provider – accredited by the DfE to provide courses that lead to a recommendation for QTS

TSA – Teaching Schools Alliance

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[1] DfE (2019), [Supporting early career teachers](#)

Executive Summary

To support several strands of its ongoing work to improve teacher recruitment and retention, the Department for Education (DfE) commissioned CooperGibson Research (CGR) to explore the experiences, benefits and challenges for schools in hosting trainee teachers and employing NQTs.

Methodology

Following a brief literature review to inform the design of fieldwork materials, 281 qualitative telephone interviews and face-to-face case study visits were undertaken with:

- 158 school staff (72 senior leaders, 73 mentors/induction tutors, 13 middle leaders/teachers).
- 10 school governors.
- 40 trainees and 47 NQTs.
- 18 representatives from 15 accredited ITT providers.
- 8 wider stakeholders, including appropriate bodies and Teaching School Alliances.

The training pathways considered during this research were:[2]

- Higher Education Institution (HEI) undergraduate degree.
- HEI postgraduate degree.
- School Direct salaried and unsalaried.
- School-based initial teacher training (SCITT).
- Teach First.

Making decisions: placement schools and training routes

When offering placements to trainees and recruiting NQTs, the capacity to provide support and high-quality mentoring to trainees and NQTs was a significant factor for providers and school staff.[3] Trainees and NQTs themselves were keen to understand the types of support that they would receive, particularly in relation to managing workload, gathering evidence and assessment.

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[2] For a description of each training route, see Appendix 1.
[3] Where 'school staff' is used throughout, this refers to the range of individuals working in placement schools that were involved in the research, such as senior leaders, mentors and middle leaders (for example, those involved in the case study discussions), but excludes NQTs.

Training providers[4] and school senior leaders[5] both emphasised the importance of being able to develop open, collaborative relationships with one another. The location of placement schools was important to training providers and trainees/NQTs in terms of managing the logistics of travel time and familiarity with a local area or school context.

Senior leaders and mentors agreed that participating in ITT provided a good opportunity for identifying potential future teachers for recruitment purposes, particularly in shortage subject areas. There were, however, some differences in the reasons behind senior leaders' decisions to host trainees on HEI-led[6] or school-based[7] training routes.

- **HEI-led routes:** School staff generally enjoyed the collaboration with universities available through these training routes, including being able to engage with current research and knowing that trainees were exposed to up-to-date pedagogy.

- **School-based routes:** Senior leaders commonly described how these routes offered an opportunity to 'grow your own' recruits and mould them to the ethos of the school. These routes were perceived to immerse trainees in school environments, and therefore enable them to make rapid progress.

Appropriate bodies

Relationships with appropriate bodies were largely historic and many senior leaders were unaware of the range of appropriate bodies available to them. The majority of NQTs, when asked the question, said that they did not have direct contact with the appropriate body despite the statutory requirement for all NQTs to be designated a named contact at the appropriate body.

The provision of mentoring and support

A variety of individuals commonly provided mentoring and support to trainees and NQTs in schools. These were: ITT mentor, ITT professional mentor, NQT induction tutor and NQT mentor (these are all referred to as 'school-based' mentors). ITT providers also provide tutors who visit schools and will carry out joint observations.

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[4] Where 'training provider' or 'provider' is used throughout, this refers to accredited ITT providers including those supporting School Direct routes.
[5] Where 'senior leaders' is used throughout, this refers to senior leaders in ITT placement schools, or schools employing NQTs.
[6] Where 'HEI-led routes' is used throughout the report, this refers to undergraduate and postgraduate ITT courses. For further detail, see section 1.6.
[7] Where 'school-based routes' is used throughout the report, this refers to Teach First, School Direct and SCITT.

School-based mentors were consistently perceived by all interviewee participants as critical to the success of ITT placements and the positive development of NQTs.

In large primaries and secondary schools, mentoring for trainees was often split between two individuals: 1) a subject or classroom mentor, and 2) a professional mentor. The latter was commonly a senior leader, and supported trainees' broader awareness of the teaching profession. For NQTs, the provision of a formal induction tutor is a statutory requirement. They carry out similar tasks to subject and professional mentors, plus the coordination of NQT assessment. Some schools also appoint an additional NQT mentor to support the role of the induction tutor and provide an additional layer of support to early career teachers.

In terms of informal support strategies that worked well, all interviewee types mentioned buddy systems, peer networks, and encouraging whole school responsibility for the development of trainees and NQTs. Senior leaders and mentors particularly appreciated newsletters and bulletins sent by training providers to help them keep track of deadlines, tasks and evidence requirements.

Challenges in offering support were most commonly related to the lack of protected time that mentors were given for carrying out the role, and the additional workload created for mentors. There was also mixed feedback (both positive and negative) from school staff and trainees/NQTs in relation to the quality and range of support available via ITT providers and/or appropriate bodies.

Evidencing and quality assurance

Trainees and NQTs were required to collate and submit evidence to providers and appropriate bodies of how their work met the Teachers' Standards. Evidencing requirements were flagged by all interviewee types as a challenging aspect of ITT and (to a lesser extent) NQT experiences. This was due to the variety, range and amount of evidence required and, for trainees, the inconsistency in expectations between providers (even within the same ITT route). There were reported to be gaps in understanding as to what constituted evidence among trainees, NQTs, and their mentors/assessors. Evidencing was perceived by all types of interview participant to be a time-consuming process, particularly where providers required evidence to be collated and submitted via paper-based systems. It was reported by trainees and their mentors that these systems often led to duplication of effort.

Nonetheless, attempts had been made by some schools and ITT providers to reduce evidencing requirements. Electronic systems and software to support evidencing were generally perceived to save time, reduce workload and encourage more consistent review of progress by mentors, ITT tutors or NQT coordinators.

Benefits and challenges

The perceived benefits and challenges of hosting trainees and employing NQTs were similarly reported by the different types of interview participant (and were similar across the training routes).

The key benefits of hosting trainees and employing NQTs that were cited in this study include:

- The injection of fresh ideas into the workforce, through energetic and enthusiastic people coming into the school who are able to share up-to-date pedagogical knowledge and ideas.
- Promoting reflective practice among mentors and early career teachers.
- Staff development for the existing workforce, e.g. leadership and development skills for mentors.

Common challenges included:

- Finding appropriate and sufficient time to provide support, especially for school-based mentors.
- Balancing evidencing requirements with management of a sustainable workload.
- Managing expectations among trainees and NQTs.
- Mentors not feeling able to manage difficult conversations effectively.

Areas for development

Most NQTs hoped that they would remain in their current school following their NQT year, and most trainees believed that they would remain in teaching. Some NQTs, however, were unsure that they would remain in teaching longer-term, due to the workload. A range of possible solutions was suggested by interview participants, including: increasing support and recognition for mentors, clearer information about the range of training routes, a strengthened role for appropriate bodies, more support for transition between ITT and NQT, and streamlining of evidence requirements (including removing any duplication and reducing the workload burden of evidencing on trainees, NQTs and their mentors).

Points for consideration

- **Value of hosting trainees/employing NQTs:** The benefits for schools of hosting trainees and employing NQTs should be more widely promoted to encourage more schools to engage in initial teacher training (ITT) and development.

- **The importance of school-based mentors:** Raising the profile of standards for school-based mentors[8] and/or accreditation or national recognition of the status would provide acknowledgement of their commitment, knowledge and skills. This could link with the commitments made by DfE in relation to fully funded mentor training and funded mentor time as part of the Early Career Framework (ECF),[9] and the development of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) as set out in the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy (2019).[10] As the ECF focuses on NQT mentoring, similar consideration should be given to the important role undertaken by mentors of trainees.

- **Managing mentor workload:** Consideration needs to be given to how schools can support mentors more appropriately for the time they are required to give to the role. This could include additional timetabled/protected time (which may be facilitated as part of the new two-year induction), support to improve management of other responsibilities and school commitments, promoting examples of good practice, and exploring how the mentor role could work across job-shares. Promotion of peer networks and buddy systems for mentors as well as trainees and NQTs, would help to encourage more schools to introduce such support systems.

- **Ensuring capacity:** Consideration should be given to how timetabling and staff commitments can be managed to allow trainees to experience the teaching of different age groups and types of pupils as this would help them to meet the Teachers' Standards and prepare better for becoming a qualified teacher.

- **Variations in evidencing:** There needs to be clarity and information on what evidence is expected from ITT providers and appropriate bodies and what is considered to be evidence. Streamlined processes for gathering evidence, and standardisation across providers, are also required. This would reduce confusion created by the range of routes available and conflicting requirements between them (and, sometimes from providers within the same routes).

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[8] The Teaching Schools Council (July, 2016) *National Standards for school-based initial teacher training (ITT) mentor*
[9] DfE (2019), *Supporting early career teachers*
[10] DfE (2019), *Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy*

- **Workload implications of evidence collection:** ITT providers should make efforts to ensure manageable and sustainable workloads in relation to evidencing and to actively find ways to reduce the burdens on trainees, NQTs and their mentors. This includes ensuring that the evidence requested is necessary, and clear guidance is provided as to what information can be considered as evidence. More efficient processes for collating and presenting evidence would benefit those involved. Furthermore, all those requiring evidence (ITT providers and appropriate bodies) should be encouraged to review their processes and requirements and gather feedback from schools, trainees, NQTs and mentors to eliminate, as far as possible, the need to duplicate content. Online and digital systems should be explored further to see how they can better reduce workload.

- **Effective partnership working:** This should be encouraged between ITT providers and schools to ensure practical experience and theoretical understanding are up-to-date and aligned. Providers and placement schools should consider together how trainees can have the 'full experience' to ensure that they are aware of the wider range of activities and responsibilities that they will take on as qualified teachers.

- **Awareness of different ways to train:** Raising awareness of all teacher training options would open up opportunities to potential trainees and reduce the chance of applicants choosing an inappropriate pathway.

- **Awareness of appropriate bodies:** The role of appropriate bodies is currently unknown to many NQTs. A review of the appropriate body role more broadly in terms of their statutory duties, the support provided to schools and NQTs and quality assurance of induction would help to improve consistency in their provision.

- **Awareness of governors:** Consideration should be given to the role of governors and the strategic oversight they should have of their school's experience of hosting trainees and employing NQTs.

1. Introduction

Since 2000, the initial teacher training (ITT) landscape has changed dramatically. Alongside the traditional Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and teacher training degrees delivered by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), several more school-led programmes, which also lead to the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), have been introduced (see Appendix 1 for a summary of each). There are some significant variations between the routes in terms of how training is structured, including content coverage, subject knowledge and assessment criteria.

Approximately 30,000 individuals enter teacher training each year and they undertake either school-based training, or higher education institution-led courses. All trainees must spend a minimum of 120 days in schools during their training. The proportion of time spent in schools can vary according to the training route undertaken (see Appendix 1). Schools are required to provide support, development and guidance to participants whilst they are training.

Exploring the impact of training responsibilities on schools, ITT providers, trainee teachers and Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs), is an important step towards DfE's commitment to reduce workload, improve support for early career teachers and ultimately to improve teacher recruitment and retention. This is underpinned by the publication of the DfE's *Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy*.[11]

CooperGibson Research (CGR) was, therefore, commissioned to conduct a qualitative study exploring the experiences of schools in the process of training and supporting trainee teachers and NQTs.

1.1 Aims

The aim of this project was to explore the experiences, challenges and benefits of hosting trainee teachers or employing NQTs from the perspectives of schools, ITT providers, trainees and NQTs.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives were to:

- Understand how schools and ITT providers meet the statutory and individual support requirements for ITT and NQT induction.

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[11] DfE (2019), *Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy*

- Understand the perspectives and experiences of school staff, trainee teachers and NQTs, of the support provided (including support provided by providers and appropriate bodies), satisfaction with placements and impact on longer term career plans.

- Understand the extent to which trainee placements and induction experiences reflect expectations (of schools and individuals) around support and development.

- Identify those in school who are most affected (both positively and negatively) by hosting trainees/employing NQTs, and explore how they are affected.

- Identify the challenges and benefits for schools of hosting trainee teachers and employing NQTs and any differences relating to teacher training route.

- Explore how the effects of hosting trainees/employing NQTs (effects on the school, individual school staff, trainee/NQT) are managed by schools, providers, trainees/NQTs.

- Explore the impact on schools and individuals of the evidence and data that needs to be collated to evidence progress in meeting the ITT and NQT years' statutory requirements.

- Identify examples of current practice in supporting trainees and early career teachers.

- Ensure perspectives are provided across five key teacher training pathways:

  - Higher Education Institution (HEI) undergraduate degree.

  - HEI postgraduate degree.

  - School Direct salaried and unsalaried.

  - School-based initial teacher training (SCITT).

  - Teach First.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Literature review

A brief thematic literature review was conducted as part of the scoping phase of the project. Its key aim was to identify, collate and synthesise any existing research data and evidence of perceptions relating to the challenges and benefits for schools in hosting trainee teachers and employing NQTs, school experiences of the different training routes and perceived impacts on schools.

The findings of the literature review and gaps in evidence identified can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

1.3.2 Fieldwork

In order to understand the experiences, benefits and any challenges of hosting trainee teachers and employing NQTs, a qualitative methodology was employed utilising a mix of telephone and face-to-face interviews.

A total of 281 respondents were interviewed across a range of stakeholders in England: accredited initial teacher training (ITT) providers, placement schools, trainees and NQTs and wider stakeholders, including appropriate bodies, local authorities (LAs), multi-academy trusts (MATs) and teaching school alliances (TSAs). Fieldwork was designed to enable triangulation of findings between providers, schools, trainees and NQTs. Providers were asked to recruit their current and past trainees, NQTs and relevant schools (in which trainees were on placement or NQTs were employed) to the research.

The full fieldwork methodology can be found in Appendix 3.

1.4 Sample

An overall sample of 281 respondents was achieved via a mix of telephone and face to face interviews.

In total, 82 ITT providers were contacted to take part in the research and a final sample of 15 ITT providers was achieved. For Teach First, an interview was conducted with representatives from four regional offices. For the remaining 14 ITT providers, one representative from each provider was interviewed via telephone, resulting in a total of 18 provider representatives being interviewed (across 15 organisations).

As initial contact with schools was made by the ITT providers, it is not known how many schools were asked to take part in the research. A final sample of 68 schools was achieved, including 14 case study visits. A total of 255 school respondents were interviewed, 147 respondents via telephone and 108 respondents face-to-face.

In total, 22 wider stakeholders were contacted to take part in the research and eight telephone interviews with wider stakeholders were achieved.

The overall sample breakdown by provider, school and respondent type is detailed in Tables 1, 2 and 3. The sample breakdown for wider stakeholders is detailed in Table 4.

Table 1: Accredited ITT provider sample across ITT route

		Number of accredited provider representatives
ITT route represented by provider	HEI undergraduate	4
	HEI postgraduate	4
	School Direct salaried	2
	School Direct	2
	SCITT	2
	Teach First (regional offices)	4
Size (number of ITT allocations)	Small (<100)	2
	Medium (100-299)	4
	Large (300+)	12

Table 2: Placement school sample characteristics

		Number of placement schools
Route	HEI undergraduate	16
	HEI postgraduate	15
	School Direct salaried	2
	School Direct unsalaried	10
	SCITT	10
	Teach First	15
Phase	Primary	37
	Secondary	31

Table 2 (cont): Placement school sample characteristics

		Number of placement schools
Type	Primary Academy	3
	Primary MAT-led Academy	16
	Primary LA Maintained	18
	Secondary Academy	2
	Secondary MAT-led Academy	24
	Secondary LA Maintained	5
Region	North	20
	Midlands	12
	South	36
Ofsted	Outstanding	18
	Good	40
	Requires improvement	7
	Special measures	1
	Not rated	2
School Size	Primary small	5
	Primary medium	6
	Primary large	26
	Secondary small	9
	Secondary medium	7
	Secondary large	15
Location	Urban	56
	Rural	12
Percentage of pupils receiving FSM	Above average	31
	Below average	35
	Unknown	2

Table 3: Sample breakdown by placement school respondents

		Number of placement school respondents – telephone	Number of placement school respondents – face to face
Route	HEI undergraduate	30	20
	HEI postgraduate	34	25
	School Direct (salaried and unsalaried)	26	21
	SCITT	23	14
	Teach First (regional offices)	34	28
Phase	Primary	78	53
	Secondary	69	55
ITT/NQT	Trainees	25	15
	NQTs	25	22
School role	Senior leaders	52	20
	Mentors/induction tutors	43	30
	Middle leaders/other staff	-	13
	Governors	2	8
Trainee/NQT gender	Male	7	6
	Female	43	31
Secondary trainee/NQT subject	English	8	3
	Modern Foreign Languages	3	2
	Sciences	3	2
	Mathematics	2	4
	Humanities	6	4

Table 4: Sample breakdown by wider stakeholder type

		Number
Type	Appropriate body, within which:	6
	• National appropriate body	2
	• LA appropriate body	2
	• TSA appropriate body	1
	• TSA appropriate body (as part of a MAT)	1
	Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) and Teaching School Alliance (TSA)	1
	Multi-Academy Trust	1

1.5 Methodological considerations

As an exploratory study, the research required a robust qualitative approach to gather evidence in an area previously underexplored. A large sample of 281 respondents was achieved, incorporating feedback from a range of stakeholders involved in ITT and the NQT induction process. Qualitative interviews and the triangulation methodology provided depth of understanding across their different contexts and experiences.

A number of considerations were identified through the methodological approach:

- **Recruitment approach:** Using ITT providers as gatekeepers to schools, trainee teachers and NQTs, could potentially be burdensome for providers. The researchers offered support in the recruitment process and extended the provider sample to mitigate this as much as possible since this approach was key to achieving a more robust methodology. An important aspect of the research was the ability to triangulate findings between providers, schools and trainees/NQTs.

- **Timing:** Using a snowball sample approach required time for ITT providers to recruit schools and time for schools to recruit trainee teachers, NQTs and other staff. The allocations of school placements was also an important consideration. Providers could only contact schools once placements had been agreed and they knew where trainees would be located. For the HEI providers, in some cases, trainee school placements were not finalised until the end of October 2018. Furthermore, in order to gather feedback on experiences of their placements, trainees were required to have been in situ for a reasonable period before taking part in the research. The fieldwork window was extended to account for such issues.

- **Sample selection:** The process of recruitment via ITT providers could potentially introduce a bias to the sample achieved, for example, where providers have good relationships with schools or those who feel more confident in their ITT delivery or support of trainees and NQTs. This was addressed as much as possible by contacting a wide range of providers from the outset and via the triangulated methodology.

- **Provision of multiple pathways:** Where providers delivered more than one ITT route, for the purposes of the research and identifying interview participants, they were asked to focus on one specific route. However, where they gave comparative feedback across routes during the interviews, this was also captured in the data.

- **Placement school context:** All schools included in the research were asked to focus on their role as a placement school for trainees and/or as an employer of NQTs.

1.6 Notes for reading this report

When reading the report, note that:

- Where 'training provider' or 'provider' is used throughout the report, this refers to accredited ITT providers including those supporting School Direct routes.

- Where 'senior leaders' is used throughout, this refers to senior leaders in schools providing ITT placements and schools in which NQTs are employed.

- Where 'school staff' is used throughout, this refers to the range of individuals working in schools providing ITT placements or employing NQTs that were involved in the research, such as senior leaders, mentors and middle leaders (for example, those involved in the case study discussions), but excludes NQTs.

- Where 'school-based routes' is used throughout the report, this refers to Teach First, School Direct and SCITT.[12]

- Where 'HEI-led routes' is used throughout the report, this refers to undergraduate and postgraduate ITT courses where training is predominantly delivered by universities.

- To support reliability and robust reporting, the analysis has taken into consideration the strength of perceptions across different ITT routes. Where differences were common and identifiable, these have been highlighted. During analysis and in this report, emphasis has been placed on identifying key themes

[12] A description of each route is provided in Appendix 1. These routes were grouped to reflect the perceptions of interview participations about the training routes and the amount of time spent in school placements for each. However, it is acknowledged that HEI providers are also closely involved in the delivery of school-based ITT routes.

and patterns rather than findings attributable to a small number of interview participants. However, examples of the latter have been provided where creative or perceived good practice were highlighted by respondents.

2. Decision-making for ITT placements and NQT employment

This section discusses the factors that informed decision-making by the different types of interview participant. It includes the criteria drawn upon by training providers to select placement schools, the factors that school leaders considered when selecting ITT providers, and the points most important to NQTs when applying for teaching roles.

Summary of key points

School capacity and context: It was important to all types of interview participant that there was demonstrable capacity to support trainees and NQTs. This ranged from whole school capacity (e.g. timetabling, cover, training and CPD), through to the capacity of individual mentors to be able to perform the role effectively.

High quality mentoring: ITT providers and school senior leaders felt that it was important for school-based mentors to be good role models, model outstanding practice, and possess the appropriate aptitudes to handle difficult conversations and be patient with those new to the job.

Awareness: Awareness of the range of ITT routes appeared to depend on the starting point of the trainee. Those undertaking school-based training were more likely to have been career changers or had previous work experience in schools. Trainees on HEI-led routes had generally progressed through traditional academic pathways; several trainees on HEI-led routes only became aware of what school-based training entailed when they encountered these trainees during placements.

Previous experience and established relationships: School choices of both training providers/routes and appropriate bodies were commonly based on historic relationships. Senior leaders felt that this enabled schools to develop a good understanding of provider requirements, thereby reducing workload as processes became cyclical. Many had not considered, or were unaware that they could, review their choice of appropriate body.

Location and logistics: Providers felt that it was important to be able to visit schools promptly, where additional support was required and for observation and assessment visits; they also wished to place trainees in local areas to reduce the pressure of travel on them. Likewise, trainees and NQTs noted that location and travel were key factors in their decisions.

2.1 Identifying placement schools

ITT providers develop working relationships with potential placement schools in order to offer a range of experiences for trainees. As part of this research, the discussions with providers explored the factors that influence their ability to identify and bring on board placement schools across the range of training routes.

2.1.1 Qualities of placement schools

ITT providers were asked about the qualities that they look for in placement schools. These were consistent across the training routes and generally reflected five main factors.

1. **Capacity to offer training and support:** All providers reported that it was important for placement schools to have a demonstrable capacity to support trainees effectively. This was identified through a variety of means, including: a school's expressed commitment to ITT, due diligence by the provider (such as reviewing staffing at departmental level within secondary schools), and formal confirmation, e.g. a signed agreement, that a school could meet provider requirements.

2. **Availability of high-quality mentoring:** Providers looked to ensure that proposed mentors had the capacity to take on the role. For example, providers aimed to establish that mentors were good role models for the profession and would be able to demonstrate outstanding practice for trainees to observe. This included whether mentors had any previous or related experience, although providers generally offered mentor training and required this to be completed by those new to the role.

3. **Openness of school to collaboration:** Several providers, particularly HEIs, were looking for schools that were open and responsive in their communications. It was felt that this would encourage positive partnership working in the development of training content, delivery, providing high quality support to trainees, and meeting expectations regarding paperwork and evidencing.

4. **Location of the school:** Providers often worked with schools that were geographically close to them. Although relationships often began with schools approaching providers, location was an influencing factor for providers. For example, they considered location from the perspective of travel time required by tutors to access schools in need of support, when visiting schools as part of formal observation and assessment processes, or travel time for prospective trainees when in placement. Location was also a consideration in areas where there was increased competition from the range of teacher training providers available. Where this competition was perceived to have affected recruitment numbers,

providers had started to widen the geographical areas from which they operated in order to identify new placement schools.

5. **School context and setting:** It was generally important to providers to be able to offer a range of placement types, so that trainees could experience a variety of settings and year groups prior to their NQT year. This included consideration of the proportion of Pupil Premium on roll, as well as the proportion of English as an Additional Language (EAL) and pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

2.1.2 Other criteria for placement schools

Other criteria that providers looked for in placement schools were based on route-specific priorities and provider working processes. For example, in addition to the factors listed above, schools participating in the Teach First route were required to meet set criteria reflecting the disadvantaged communities that the route was designed to support.[13] Other school-based providers (SCITT and School Direct) included in their selection process a minimum of one visit to discuss schools' needs, staff structures, approaches to coaching, and curriculum content. They would also set out the provider's requirements and expectations of placement schools (see section 4.1). Where they were identifying lead schools as part of Teaching School Alliances, providers would also gather references from local headteachers, review Ofsted reports and scrutinise school data.

The eligibility of schools to offer training placements according to Ofsted grading varied by provider. Generally, providers stated that when identifying new placement schools, they would look for those graded 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. Indeed, some senior leaders reported in their interviews that they thought 'Good' or 'Outstanding' was a prerequisite to providing placements. However, the picture was more nuanced than this. Some providers highlighted that a grading of 'Requires Improvement' did not preclude placements being offered, but that additional considerations would be made in these circumstances. If a school had been graded 'Requires Improvement' within the previous twelve months, or if it was a trainee's first placement, providers did not consider 'Requires Improvement' to be an appropriate environment due to the additional pressures and priorities faced by such schools. However, where schools or specific departments within schools were working towards 'Good' (and had been doing so for more than twelve months), it was felt by providers that these settings could offer valuable placements during the later stages of training. For example, providers suggested that such environments would expose

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[13] School eligibility criteria for Teach First programmes are reviewed annually

trainees to a broad range of strategic and creative development work that could inform their own insights and growth as teachers.

> 'You can look at the Ofsted grade and see they are [Requires Improvement], but the biggest variation is within the school and between departments. So, just because a school is [Requires Improvement] doesn't mean they don't have strong departments within the school. We would use those strong departments to place trainees'. (Secondary provider, School Direct)

For placements in secondary schools, training providers noted that it was important to identify schools with sixth forms, so that trainees could experience delivery of the post-16 curriculum. Where they did have sixth forms, however, this requirement was often a challenge for senior leaders to meet. A few secondary senior leaders noted that they would be reluctant to give full class responsibility at post-16 to a trainee due to the potential negative impact on student outcomes. As an alternative, some enabled trainees to shadow teachers in these classes to experience post-16 delivery.

In terms of the number of trainees that were placed into a setting simultaneously, providers stated that this was at the discretion of schools. Nonetheless, providers would generally encourage schools to take more than one trainee so that they could create a peer-based community of support for both trainees and mentors (see section 3). Several providers (particularly those delivering school-based routes) noted that it was increasingly difficult to secure placements due to the range of providers and the increasing number of school-based arrangements across local areas. Others highlighted the need to check with schools how many other providers they had offered placements to for the same time period, as this could create capacity issues for mentoring and support. Where schools had academised, this could affect the number of placements available across a trust, for example, in cases where a Multi-Academy Trust had a preferred or established training route that all schools were expected to use.

2.1.3 Not selecting schools

Where providers gave reasons for not selecting schools for placements, they attributed this to school staff underestimating the level of resource required to provide a placement, or because an existing relationship had broken down. The latter was reported where there was felt to have been a reduction in a school's capacity to offer appropriate time and support to trainees. Some providers emphasised difficulties in identifying secondary schools with appropriate mentoring capacity in subject areas that were typically delivered by small departments.

Senior leaders differed in their responses and they did not commonly suggest that they stopped offering placements due to capacity issues.[14] Instead, they reported that ceasing work with any one provider was generally part of a process of streamlining training provision within their own setting. They would ultimately select the providers that were perceived to offer the highest quality and most appropriate support to schools and trainees.

> 'Initially I cast the net pretty wide [for providers], but over the last couple of years I have narrowed what we take, because you establish [a] good rapport with establishments and work out the quality that is produced from certain ones…Some may be supportive [providers] and ones that will step in if there are issues with some students and some may have the quality that fits in with the school'. (Primary senior leader, HEI postgraduate route)

2.2 School choices: offering ITT placements and employing NQTs

Commonly, the decision on which ITT route(s), and whether or not to take trainees, was made by headteachers. Those in Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) noted that sometimes there would be discussion at Director level, or with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the trust, but generally the final decision to offer placements would be made in each individual school (for school use of specific training routes see section 2.2.1). The decisions to employ NQTs were made at interview stage during school recruitment processes.

Overall, the reasons to host trainees and employ NQTs complemented each other, and often reflected strategic considerations from senior leaders in relation to how ITT and NQT experiences could impact capacity, the identification and recruitment of strong candidates and the balance of existing staff structures (Table 5).

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[14] All senior leaders interviewed were those based in schools currently offering training placements, and therefore would be unlikely to state that they stopped working with a provider as a result of capacity issues. The views of those that had previously offered training but did so no longer were not gathered as part of this research.

Table 5: Common reasons senior leaders gave for hosting trainees and employing NQTs

Hosting trainees	Employing NQTs
✓ Established working relationship with provider	✓ Interview performance: best candidate on the day
✓ School capacity to mentor, as well as offer broader support/training	✓ Prior experience in placement (reflecting the strategic recruitment process when offering training placements)
✓ Strategic recruitment (identifying strong trainees for future employment, often in shortage subject areas)	✓ School capacity to provide appropriate support
✓ Promoting balanced staffing structures: experience vs new ideas	✓ Budgetary considerations
✓ Willingness/commitment of potential mentors	✓ Balance of staff: experience vs: new ideas
✓ Composition of classes and appropriateness of potential demands on trainees (SEN, behaviour, low achievers)	

The literature review identified a need to ensure a thorough and rigorous recruitment process for NQTs (see Appendix 1). During the telephone interviews, senior leaders reported that NQTs were employed because they were selected as the best candidate at interview and the most appropriate fit for the school's culture and ethos. Governors participating in the interviews described being involved in teacher recruitment processes, and this included assessing NQTs applying for teaching posts. They reflected senior leader feedback, that the best candidates for the post were selected.

Financial considerations influenced decisions to some extent for some senior leaders and governors. However, the lower starting salary of an NQT was felt to be offset by the need for cover (enhanced Planning, Preparation, Assessment (PPA) time) and additional training compared to a more experienced teacher. As such, budget was not reported to factor highly in recruitment decisions related to NQTs. Instead, senior leaders were more likely to consider their existing staff structures. They emphasised the need to create a

balance between new and experienced staff so that each could learn from the other, and they could ensure succession planning was monitored.

Reflecting literature review findings, participation in the delivery of teacher training was regarded by several senior leaders as part of their schools' strategic recruitment processes. They felt that hosting ITT placements provided a valuable opportunity to identify potential future recruits. This was particularly common in relation to recruitment for shortage subject areas such as maths and physics, and for developing potential candidates so that they fit the school ethos and processes. Senior leaders explained that strengths and weaknesses were already identified by the NQT stage, if the school had worked with individuals during ITT placements. In return, it was felt that the candidate would also already understand, to some extent, the school setting and working processes. Senior leaders suggested that this meant more intense focus and support could be given to the candidate's own progression and development from the start of the NQT year, rather than spending this time on delivering an introduction to the school and its processes.

Placing trainees

A primary school that offered PGCE placements had designated a member of staff as trainee coordinator. This coordinator would review the school's needs and devise the most appropriate structure for placements each year. To support this work, they would send out a questionnaire each year to all staff, asking if they would be interested in having a student in their classroom. Once the questionnaires had been completed, the headteacher then reviewed the responses with the coordinator to assess each potential host teacher's strengths, 'and select the ones I think will be a good teacher for the trainees to work with to have a good experience' (Primary senior leader, HEI postgraduate route).

Following this initial selection process, the trainee coordinator and headteacher will then review the school timetable and space the potential placements out across the year.

'We look at our needs too. The summer term is a good time to have a trainee. A maths trainee [might work] at [a specified] time, or an art one [at another time]'. (Primary senior leader, HEI postgraduate route).

This process considers not only the capacity of the school but also how the work of the trainee may support curriculum delivery.

'We look at their experience in schools and how it might enhance our curriculum at that time'. (Primary senior leader, HEI postgraduate route).

2.2.1 School choice of route

Often senior leaders of schools providing placements said that they preferred particular training routes, because they had established good relationships with the respective providers over a long period of time. Not only was this perceived to promote collaborative working with providers (see section 5 for examples), but senior leaders also said that consistently working with the same providers meant that they developed a better understanding of expectations and requirements. As a result, this was felt by senior leaders and mentors to reduce the workload impact of hosting trainees, as the school could establish internal working processes in terms of evidencing and quality assurance based on provider requirements (see section 4), which then became an integrated part of a school's working cycle.

There were, however, some differences in the reasons that senior leaders selected HEI-led or school-based training.

- **HEI-led routes:** School staff generally enjoyed the collaboration with universities available through these training routes, including being able to engage with current research and knowing that trainees were exposed to up-to-date pedagogy. Senior leaders felt that consistency in these relationships had enabled school staff and their university contacts to get to know each other well and understand how each other worked. Subsequently, this maintained consistency in the support available for trainees. It was perceived by senior leaders that relationships with HEIs fostered the opportunity to have frank but constructive conversations with providers regarding placements, issues, or gaps perceived in the training from the school's perspective, and vice versa. It also enabled schools to have a thorough understanding of the monitoring systems and reporting processes used by the universities.

- **School-based routes:** Senior leaders commonly described how these routes offered an opportunity to 'grow your own' recruits and mould them to the ethos of the school. These routes were perceived to immerse trainees in school environments, and, therefore, enable them to quickly develop a deeper understanding (compared to trainees on HEI-led routes) of the day-to-day running of a school. The schools pursuing these routes sometimes suggested that the training delivered through HEI-routes did not reflect the reality of teaching, which they could address through school-based training. The local context was also significant for senior leaders in relation to school-based routes, as they were felt to nurture local talent or support the needs of the area and the specific pupil cohorts that attended the school. It was consequently felt by senior leaders opting to participate in school-based training routes that the school-based approach to teacher training could raise aspirations, as pupils viewed trainees as role models in their own community.

2.2.2 School choice of appropriate body

Relationships with appropriate bodies were largely historic. Most senior leaders, across all training routes, reported that the school had worked with the same appropriate body for a long time – and this was generally reported by senior leaders to be the local authority, rather than a local teaching school. Many were either unaware of, or had not considered, that there were other options available to them.

Some senior leaders offered slightly more feedback, noting a range of criteria in relation to their choice of appropriate body:

- Quality of the support programme offered, including the amount and quality of the training on offer for both mentors and NQTs.[15]

- School leaders appreciated joint training being made available for NQTs and mentors, so that they could develop a shared understanding of expectations. It was highlighted by one senior leader that encouraging NQTs to engage with training programmes offered by appropriate bodies was a way in which the school could demonstrate that they were a valued member of staff and the school wished to invest in their career development.

- The cost of appropriate body support was a factor for a smaller number of senior leaders. Appropriate body costing structures were reported by senior leaders to vary (for example, upfront fees through to tiered packages of support). Where training and CPD support was included in the upfront cost this was received more positively than instances where schools were required to pay for training on top of the initial fee from the appropriate body. Where decisions had been made by senior leaders to stop using the support of specific appropriate bodies, this was attributed to a perceived disparity between training offered by appropriate bodies to schools and the training that they then felt they had received.

2.2.3 Contact with appropriate bodies

It is a statutory requirement for all NQTs to be provided with a named contact at the appropriate body. During the interviews, NQTs were asked whether they had any direct contact with the appropriate body. Where they provided a response, the majority said that they did not have direct contact with the appropriate body (note, they were not asked if they had received details of a named contact). Several

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[15] Appropriate bodies have a statutory responsibility to ensure NQTs and induction coordinators are adequately supported/trained, but it is optional to provide further support. However, feedback from the interviews suggested that the level of further support available was a consideration for some school senior leaders when selecting which appropriate bodies to work with.

NQTs noted that although they did not have contact with the appropriate body, they were aware that the induction tutor or NQT coordinator in the school did have this contact, and they believed that this was part of the role of the induction tutor. A small number said that they did not know who the appropriate body was, or what their role was.

Where NQTs reported having direct contact with the appropriate body, they most commonly mentioned receiving emails containing information on training courses available or updates on requirements.

A small number of NQTs had attended training sessions delivered by the appropriate body. Where this had happened, they also noted that they felt able to contact the appropriate body if they had any questions.

> 'Someone from [the appropriate body] came to speak to us at beginning of NQT year, and said if there were any problems, get in touch. You fill a form in three times a year about how you are getting on and say if there is any extra support you need'. (Secondary RQT, HEI undergraduate route)

Senior leaders reported that where NQTs were provided with a named contact at the appropriate body, this encouraged paperwork to be timely and well organised, and NQTs were able to access a comprehensive programme of support including networking events.

2.3 Factors influencing trainee and NQT choices

The choices made by trainees and NQTs in terms of the training routes and schools they had applied to were broadly similar, and commonly related to their own level of prior experience, location, and the amount of support/structure of the training on offer (Table 6).

Table 6: Common reasons trainees and NQTs gave for their training and employment choices

Trainees	NQTs
✓ Previous experience within setting	✓ Placement experience within setting
✓ Logistics (Location of school/length of commute)	✓ Logistics (location, transport links)
✓ Time spent in school vs time with provider	✓ Reputation/'feel' of the school
✓ Ethos of a particular school/route	✓ Amount, range and quality of support available

Both trainees and NQTs reported that prior experience in a setting informed their decisions about school placements or applying for teaching posts. For example, within the school-based routes, several trainees had either worked as Teaching Assistants (TAs) within a placement school; several NQTs had undertaken a training placement within the school in which they were employed.

Word of mouth was important to both groups – trainees often heard about training routes via other people, and NQTs described becoming aware of a school's 'reputation' or 'feel' prior to applying for a job. For example, NQTs felt more comfortable accepting a post when a range of staff had made the time to interact with them when they visited the school for interview.

> 'I looked at a couple of jobs, but obviously, because I was here on a placement, it just sort of fell into place at the right time for me... I think when you walk into some schools you just get a vibe from the people you work with, how you are supported…. I knew it and it made my life this year a lot easier knowing that I was coming to a school where I knew the support, I knew the people I was working with, I knew the policies, I knew the structure of the school which made it so much easier this year'. (Primary NQT, HEI undergraduate route)

Reflecting the findings of the literature review, NQTs also commonly mentioned searching for job opportunities online, with a small number liaising with recruitment agencies.

Just as providers had noted the importance of tutors being able to travel easily to placement schools, trainees and NQTs also placed the location of the school in relation to their home as a priority. Being familiar with the local area and living locally were perceived to ease the pressure of the training and NQT years without the additional

challenge of a relocation to consider. Some wanted to be assured that there would not be a long commute on either side of the day, that there would efficient transport links, or that the expense of travelling to work would not be prohibitive.

Smaller numbers of trainees and NQTs stated that they tried to gauge the level of support that would be on offer to them from providers and schools. For several NQTs, a strong internal NQT programme had informed their decision to apply for a role at a school. This was often more important than the school context or performance.

> 'I wanted to experience a more challenging school, but I also wanted to ensure that the support in that first year was there as well. I wanted to…challenge myself and develop what I didn't develop within my training'. (Secondary NQT, SCITT)

2.3.1 Learning about different training routes

Among trainees, those taking up HEI-led routes said that they had gathered most of their information from university websites and open days, assessing them by the amount of content available on the website and (like NQTs when attending job interviews) how personable and enthusiastic staff had been when they visited a university campus. These trainees had generally been attracted by taking an academic approach to training; they were interested in pedagogical theory and linking this to classroom practice, or they had already completed an undergraduate degree (i.e. a qualification other than a BEd) and wanted to extend their level of academic study. Those undertaking the undergraduate route were also attracted by the speed with which they would complete their training (i.e. they would qualify after three years and be able to start teaching, rather than completing a three-year degree and then a fourth year following a PGCE). Some on the postgraduate route had selected the training based on the level of support offered by the provider and their impression of the university campus (although in retrospect they recognised that the latter was not a priority given the time spent in schools on placements – see section 6).

Those undertaking school-based training were more likely to have been career changers, possessing skills that they felt were transferable from industry, or had financial or family commitments and were therefore attracted by the salaried routes. The majority taking school-based routes had prior school experience or chose the routes as they wanted to develop practical skills from the start of their training.[16]

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[16] A small number of school leaders and mentors reported that where financial considerations had been a motivation to training, this had resulted in their experience in individuals leaving training/the profession early.

For Teach First, all trainees and NQTs reported that they had chosen the route as it enabled them to work as a teacher with immediate class responsibility. They had responded positively to the ethos of Teach First. They commonly reported seeing a stand or poster at a careers fair, for example, and the content of the route's promotional material had resonated with their wish to work in a profession that contributed towards local communities and supporting disadvantaged young people.

Levels of awareness among potential teacher training recruits regarding the range of routes available to them, however, appeared to be patchy. Retrospectively, some of those on school-based routes felt that they may have been better suited to an HEI-led route with more time for learning background theory; conversely, some undertaking HEI-led routes felt that they would have appreciated a more school-led practical approach once they heard more from other trainees about how school-based routes worked. It was only after talking to school-based peers, after they had started training, that some of those on HEI-led training routes seemed to learn about school-based routes. This suggests that clearer information and guidance for ITT candidates about the range of training opportunities available may be beneficial (see section 6).

3. Pivotal relationships: Mentoring and support

This section explores the key relationships that interview participants of all types felt were critical to the success of ITT placements and NQT induction. Thus, it predominantly focuses on the role of school-based mentors, but also discusses the support available from providers and appropriate bodies, the challenges encountered and the types of support that were felt to work well.

Summary of key points

The types and formats of support offered to school staff (including mentors), trainees and NQTs, both internally and externally, was wide ranging and could be both formal (regular meetings with mentors, training/CPD training sessions) and informal (peer networks, buddy systems and ongoing conversations with colleagues around schools).

The role of the school-based mentor, and the host teacher where they were not also the mentor, was perceived by all interviewee types to be pivotal to the success of ITT placements, and to the positive development of NQTs through their first year in teaching. Indeed, where perceptions of the training/NQT experience were not as positive, this was commonly attributed to a poor relationship with a mentor or a perceived lack of support.

In large primary and secondary schools, the mentor role was often split between two individuals: 1) a subject or classroom mentor, and 2) a professional mentor. The latter was commonly a senior leader, and supported trainees' broader awareness of the teaching profession and the attitude and approaches required for the job. Professional mentors, link tutors and NQT coordinators would also carry out quality assurance on subject mentors.

For many mentors, their role in supporting trainees and NQTs would shift from 'mentoring' through to 'coaching', whereby there would be more emphasis on discussion, self-reflection and the sharing of ideas.

In terms of the support that worked well, many schools implemented buddy systems and peer networks, and felt that it was important to acknowledge a trainee as a member of school staff and promote whole school responsibility for training. They also noted that regular newsletters and bulletins from training providers were very useful.

Challenges in offering support generally related to the capacity of mentors and the additional workload created for mentors in carrying out the role. There was also mixed feedback in relation to the quality and range of support available to schools, trainees and NQTs via ITT providers and/or appropriate bodies.

3.1 Overview of support in place

School leaders, mentors, trainees and NQTs all spoke in detail about receiving varying forms of formal and informal support throughout the ITT and NQT process.

- **Formal support** for school staff and trainees/NQTs was delivered by a variety of stakeholders, including: tutors based within ITT training providers, internal school-based networks (including mentors for trainees and NQTs), external CPD commissioned by schools, and other staff networks such as those formed through Multi-Academy Trusts and Teaching School Alliances.

- **Informal support** tended to take the form of peer groups for trainees and NQTs either face-to-face or online/through social media and mobile applications (apps); many trainees and NQTs also reported that they received a large amount of informal support from their colleagues within schools. This included from mentors and other staff who did not have a designated mentoring role.

Overall, the forms of support available were similar across each training route. Variances were generally related to individual provider or school processes rather than approaches specific to training routes. An overview of the support mechanisms available to school staff, trainees and NQTs is provided below (Table 7).

Table 7: Support mechanisms available during ITT and NQT years

	Common forms of support available
ITT provider to school/mentor	Formal mentor training plus additional training if required for specific issues (this training covered a range of topics such as expectations, paperwork, potential challenges). Visits to school to discuss programme/requirements and then regular visits from ITT tutors throughout the year. Joint observations with ITT tutor providing support for mentors as well as trainees. Open communications via email, distributing newsletters/briefings of weekly requirements or relevant research and publications. Provision of central online resources for recording paperwork and guidance. If trainees were having difficulty, providers commonly reported that they would offer additional visits/extra meetings with trainees, or offer more training to mentors.
ITT provider to trainees	Tutor visits to school, observing lessons (often alongside placement mentor), setting clear expectations through guidance and handbooks, lectures/training sessions to cover a range of subjects including the training programme itself and paperwork requirements. Open lines of communication with personal tutors via email, telephone and face-to-face tutorials.

	Common forms of support available
School (incl. mentor) to trainee/NQT	For trainees: weekly mentor meetings of at least one hour. For NQTs, there are statutory regulations that schools are required to follow during NQT induction, including reduced timetable hours.[17] Schools also noted offering mentor sessions, often ad hoc or group meetings. In addition to statutory requirements, senior leaders provided a wide range of examples of additional support that they made available for ITTs and NQTs. This included buddy schemes, offering trainee/NQT-specific internal training, the opportunity to attend whole school or MAT training sessions, peer networks, and the development of support plans where specific targets needed to be met or trainees/NQTs were experiencing additional challenges.
School to mentor	Internal CPD on mentoring and leadership development. Sometimes, protected time for weekly trainee meetings, but this was not as common for NQT mentors. A small number of schools encouraged peer networks among mentors so that they could share ideas of how to deliver the role.
School to provider	Feedback on training content and how this reflected in-school practice, and delivery of subject-based specialist seminars as part of HEI-led training routes.
Appropriate body to school/mentor	This was reported by senior leaders to be variable. Where they took place, visits and training sessions were arranged where required or schools requested this for NQTs experiencing challenges. Provision of advice and guidance should senior leaders/mentors have queries or concerns (e.g. about procedures to be followed) was common. Some school staff reported receiving guidance documents stipulating the number of times NQTs should be observed, how to review progress, and confirmation of statutory reporting requirements. Information on training packages was also made available to school staff by appropriate bodies.
Appropriate body to NQT	Direct support to NQTs was variable, and most NQTs were unaware of the role of the appropriate body or the availability of support from appropriate bodies. Where available, it included general help with queries or issues coming out of induction, clarification of processes and guidance on gathering evidence and the requirements they need to meet by the end of NQT year, training on statutory processes and

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[17] See: DfE (2018), *Induction for newly qualified teachers: Statutory guidance for appropriate bodies, headteachers, school staff and governing bodies*.

Common forms of support available
soft skills courses. Additional direct support was provided should an NQT be struggling.

The variety of mentoring roles

The following individuals commonly provide mentoring and support to trainees and NQTs in schools.

- **ITT mentor:** A member of school staff who supports a trainee during their placement, including regular (weekly) meetings to review progress, discuss issues as they arise and ensure appropriate evidence is being collated by the trainee.

- **ITT professional mentor:** Commonly a school senior leader, who supported trainees' broader awareness of the teaching profession.

- **ITT tutor:** An individual from the ITT training provider. Engagement with trainees commonly included visits to school, observing lessons (often alongside school-based mentors); delivering lectures/training sessions and offering communication and support via telephone, email and face-to-face tutorials.

- **NQT induction tutor:** A requirement set out in statutory induction guidance; to provide day-to-day monitoring and support, and coordination of assessment. The Statutory Induction Guidance states: '*The induction tutor must hold QTS and have the necessary skills and knowledge to work successfully in this role and should be able to provide effective coaching and mentoring*'.

- **NQT mentor:** Commonly designated internally by schools to deliver the mentoring aspects of the induction tutor's responsibilities, and provide an additional layer of support to early career teachers.

Please note that, unless otherwise stated, reference to 'school-based mentors' includes ITT mentors and professional mentors, NQT induction tutors and NQT mentors.

The remainder of this section focuses predominantly on the role of the school-based mentor, as this was identified by all interview participants as being pivotal to the ITT and NQT experience. Later in the section, findings are presented in relation to other forms of support that were perceived by interview participants to work well, and where there may be gaps and challenges in current support systems.

3.2 The crucial role of the school-based mentor

Across all training routes, and during the NQT year, interview participants consistently and frequently cited the school-based mentor as the most critical factor for success.[18] When asked about the most beneficial aspects of their training, trainees and NQTs across all routes would commonly mention working with, and learning from, their school-based mentors. Conversely, where trainees or NQTs reported having a challenging experience during a training placement or NQT year, the mentor relationship had not worked as effectively as they had hoped or expected.

> 'The support [from my mentor]…is the main thing that has really helped, as there have been challenges along the way. Some classes are a bit more tricky in terms of behaviour management than others, and having that support behind you is really helpful…for your self-confidence and belief in yourself as a teacher….Having that reassurance and that person to talk to does really make a difference'. (Secondary NQT, HEI postgraduate route)

The number of school-based mentors varied by school phase.

- Trainees and NQTs in primary schools were generally allocated a mentor within school to support them. This was often a member of staff within the same year group (if more than one-form entry), or the same key stage. In small primary schools, the mentor/induction tutor was commonly a senior leader.

- Secondary trainees and NQTs were generally supported by a subject mentor. The subject mentor was specifically someone within the same department as them, who could provide them with support in their subject alongside pastoral support.

- Secondary trainees (and those in large primaries) were also allocated a professional mentor, in much the same way that all NQTs (regardless of phase) worked with their NQT induction tutors. The professional mentors and NQT induction tutors would quality assure the mentoring provided by the subject mentor and played a key role in upholding professional standards e.g. discussing behaviour management, conduct and attitudes (for more detail on the role of the professional mentor, see section 3.2.3).

3.2.1 Activities undertaken by mentors

School-based mentors were asked to summarise the work that they undertook in their role. This was fairly similar across all of the trainee and NQT experiences, and most commonly comprised the following tasks:

[18] Perceptions of the support provided by tutors from ITT providers, and by appropriate bodies, are discussed in section 4.5, as these were more variable.

- **Weekly formal meetings.** These hourly meetings took place with trainees as a training requirement (although a very small number of cases were identified where this was not happening); to a lesser extent, they were also offered to NQTs. These meetings were used for a variety of purposes such as reviewing progress against the Teachers' Standards, planning, workload management, discussing lesson observation feedback such as strengths or areas for development. Depending on the school setting, some mentors also covered issues such as behaviour management and assessment for learning but in many schools, these were covered by a separate, 'professional' mentor (see section 3.2.3). Sometimes the mentor was responsible for organising CPD/training. In other schools the headteacher or lead mentor took this responsibility, especially if the required training was external and there was a financial implication to accessing it.

- **Carrying out lesson observations.** The arrangements for observations varied according to school and training route. For example, HEI postgraduate trainees were often permanently in the class with a host teacher (who was commonly also their mentor) and would be observed regularly and often each day. This meant that feedback was consistently provided through a process of discussion. Teach First trainees would be in class on their own and observed weekly. Other providers stipulated twice weekly observations of trainees. For NQTs, appropriate bodies generally required half-termly observations of NQTs. This was a task that could be shared with another member of the school staff. Senior leaders, ITT tutors and NQT coordinators sometimes observed trainees and NQTs to verify the quality of the teaching and its impact on pupils. At other times, senior leaders and/or professional mentors conducted joint observations and feedback sessions with mentors as part of internal quality assurance processes, or to inform CPD for the mentor.

- **Informal interactions**. These were commonly perceived by mentors to be a core aspect of their role. They often took place daily, for example when the mentor and trainee/NQT were both in the staffroom or a separate office space. Where mentors did not have their mentoring time protected in the timetable, these were regarded as important opportunities to liaise with trainees and NQTs.

- **Report writing.** This task was undertaken by mentors to meet provider and appropriate body requirements (see section 4). Rather than variations according to the type of training route, frequency of reporting depended on the requirements set by each provider (i.e. these requirements could differ between providers offering the same route). For some trainees, mentors wrote weekly, midterm and summative reports. Other providers required one summative report at the end of placement. NQT induction tutors were responsible for writing termly reports to the appropriate body.

- **Teaching and learning**. Many mentors created timetables for trainees, ensuring that they delivered their allocated proportion of weekly teaching time and that these lessons were timetabled evenly over the course of a week. For both trainees and NQTs, mentors provided support with planning and marking, and created opportunities for team teaching or paired teaching. Sometimes modelling of outstanding teaching was offered by another member of staff and the mentor facilitated this by organising for trainees/NQTs to spend time with subject or key stage leads, or specialist staff such as SEN coordinators.

To support progression, mentors for the first placement in the SCITT sometimes developed action plans to support the move to their second placement – this would highlight areas they felt the trainee needed to address in their second placement. This action would then be discussed in a joint meeting with the mentor from the other school and the trainee as well.

Generally, mentors enjoyed their role and having input into the development of a new generation of teachers. Several mentors and senior leaders regarded engaging with trainees and NQTs as a 'duty' of the profession (see section 5 for the benefits that mentors identified from the role in terms of self-development).

3.2.2 Criteria for selecting school-based mentors

During the interviews, senior leaders were asked to describe the criteria they used when selecting school-based mentors for trainees and NQTs. Broadly similar responses were given across the range of training routes.

Qualities senior leaders looked for in mentors

- **Strong, confident teachers**: This ensured that trainees would be able to observe good or outstanding teaching practice on a regular basis.

- **Capacity to mentor**: As with decisions to host trainees more generally, school leaders were keen to ensure that potential mentors and, in secondary schools, the respective subject departments, had the appropriate capacity to deliver the role effectively.

- **Personal qualities**: Senior leaders often considered the personality of the potential mentor when pairing them with trainees/NQTs, suggesting that they needed to be approachable, nurturing, open to sharing ideas and engaging with colleagues, and able to have difficult conversations.

- **Willingness and commitment:** Most senior leaders felt that it was important for the mentor to show that they wanted to take on the role, either by volunteering or applying through an internal recruitment process.

Some senior leaders reported that they would not offer a mentoring role to teachers working part-time, as they felt the mentor should be a member of staff always on-site in case a trainee/NQT has questions or challenges.

> 'I was asked to be a mentor because… [senior leaders] wanted to put [the trainee] with someone who is consistently a good teacher and not working part-time. We have a lot of part-time staff. I was one of the candidates and no-one else offered to do it, so I said I would'. (Primary mentor, School Direct)

Although the need for consistency in mentoring was acknowledged, ideas for how this could be achieved with mentors working flexibly may be worth exploring further in schools, for example where two teachers in a job share might share the mentoring role. This feedback resonates with research into flexible working in schools, which identified that one of the barriers to teachers working flexibly were concerns that they would miss out on professional development opportunities (which mentors regarded their role to be), or where they were required to rescind areas of responsibility should they work part-time.[19]

Mentors advice to others

During the interviews, mentors were asked about the approaches they took to ensure that mentoring was effective. They commonly noted that this was dependent on the personality of the trainee/NQT, with some emphasising that mentoring was its most effective when trainees/NQTs themselves were proactive and well-prepared for their meetings.

The advice they offered for future mentors was to:

- Gradually give the lead to trainees, and encourage them to take the initiative during meetings, when discussing feedback or planning their next targets.
- Encourage trainees and NQTs to reflect on their own practice, rather than immediately telling them about strengths and weaknesses identified.
- Be mindful of maintaining the 'mentor' role during all interactions with the trainee/NQT, including at lunchtimes or when sharing more general conversations with colleagues about their own class teaching/day. This would create for trainees and NQTs an attitude of professionalism to model in their own practice.

[19]See DfE (2019), *Exploring flexible working practice in schools*

Thus, most mentors across all training routes either had several years' experience of mentoring or had stepped forward to take up the role recently as they believed it would be beneficial to their own development. A small number had experienced a very positive relationship with their own training/NQT mentor and wanted to do the same for others as a result. A few noted that they had undertaken the same training route as the trainee they were mentoring. Indeed, when asked about selecting mentors, senior leaders said that they found it effective to pair a trainee with a mentor who had completed the same ITT route. This was because the mentor was perceived to be able to offer the trainee empathy and understanding, or share good practice in meeting evidence requirements, thus enhancing the support on offer.

A small number of mentors stated that they had been asked to take up the role by senior leaders, even if they had not wanted to. Where this happened, the mentors generally attributed their reluctance in the role to workload and capacity concerns. Trainees and NQTs were able to perceive this reluctance, and they were more likely to state that they felt like a burden during school placements, were aware of the time they took asking questions of their mentor, or they directly understood that their mentor did not want to carry out their role. In some of these cases, trainees reported that it was difficult to set up weekly meetings with their mentors, and some NQTs reported that they did not have regular meetings at all.

3.2.3 The role of the 'professional' mentor in supporting ITT placements

In large primary schools and secondary schools, the mentor role was often split between two individuals: 1) a subject or classroom mentor, and 2) a professional mentor.[20] One provider stipulated that all trainees were to have a subject mentor and a professional mentor. The latter role was commonly taken up by senior leaders, and this additional support was regarded by many interview participants (across all types) as a critical factor in the development of trainees' broader awareness of the teaching profession and the attitude and approaches required for the job.

Even where they did not provide a designated professional mentor, several senior leaders across the different training routes emphasised that ongoing CPD regarding 'professional studies' was a critical aspect of teacher training. They felt that this helped to ensure that trainees received at least an overview of a full range of issues, including:

- Safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection regulations.

- SEND, pastoral support and mental health awareness.

- Working effectively with teaching assistants.

- Building trusting relationships with students (specifically noted by senior leaders in primary schools), using appropriate language and positive reinforcement during lessons.

As part of school-based training, providers quality assured school mentors to ensure they were supporting trainees appropriately; this was common in primary settings. In secondary school-based provision, this quality assurance of mentoring was carried out by the professional mentor (as detailed in section 4.2.3).

[20] In small primary schools, the headteacher was often the mentor for trainees and NQTs.

The professional mentor

Professional mentors offered support for a range of issues related to school life. These included:

- Statutory school processes such as safeguarding, data and assessment
- Strategies for behaviour management, planning, marking, dealing with parents
- Broader concepts to prepare the trainee for employment, such as conduct across the school site and with colleagues, professional dress, attitude to work

A professional mentor in a secondary school participating in the Teach First route described the programme that they ran through during their fortnightly meetings with trainees. Although they had set topic areas to cover, they explained that the meetings 'become personalised….[because] sometimes we won't get beyond welfare if there has been a particular issue, sometimes it's just about targets, sometimes [trainees] want to talk about particular classes'.

From those discussions, specific action points will be set with the trainee, such as managing a practical activity effectively within a time limit. If possible, the meeting might then be paused whilst the professional mentor takes the trainee to observe a relevant lesson taking place at the time. 'Or', said the professional mentor, 'I will give [the trainee] a list of teachers they can go and [observe]'. They explained that observation feedback forms for trainees were 'non-judgemental', and did not reference Ofsted outcomes or gradings, but strengths of practice, areas to be celebrated and learning to be developed. 'We talk it over and put in place things to facilitate that [development]'. (Secondary senior leader, Teach First)

Professional mentors developed their knowledge and understanding of the role through colleagues who had also undertaken the job. Where they provided feedback on their development, professional mentors were not sure how much a new professional mentor would understand about what was expected without insight from a senior leader with previous experience (e.g. professional mentors did not mention training or development offered by providers for this type of mentoring, even though some providers requested the role to be in place).

In addition to the formal roles of subject and professional mentor, many trainees and, retrospectively, NQTs (when considering their ITT year) across the different routes also highlighted that other members of school staff offered valuable support. This was particularly notable in secondary schools, for example, where departmental colleagues shared lesson planning, and provided advice in areas such as behaviour management, assessment and moderation. Trainees also appreciated being able to observe teachers other than their mentor so that they could experience different teaching approaches and

styles. Some senior leaders emphasised that they were keen to encourage this, and mentors also said that they liaised with colleagues to set these arrangements up. Retrospectively, some NQTs thought they would have appreciated being able to observe other colleagues more during their training if there had been capacity in the school timetable to enable it.

> 'It is good for [trainees] to get out of the department as well, because [otherwise] they … are always in the same department…I think it would be nice for them to have some time to go out and see other departments. Or go down to the primary [school] and see something down there and have that actually built in [to their training]. Just to get that wide experience'. (Secondary mentor, Teach First)

3.3 Experiences of induction

In relation to the support offered through NQT induction, school staff and NQTs most frequently mentioned that this was provided internally by NQT coordinators/tutors and school-based mentors. For example, senior leader feedback regarding induction processes generally focused on school systems rather than those accessed externally. They described induction training being timetabled on one day of the week for consistency, and being delivered separately to protect NQT time wherever possible.

During induction sessions, senior leaders or NQT coordinators/tutors would run through whole school systems and processes with NQTs. Some would request designated members of staff to deliver training sessions on individual policies such as General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), SEND and inclusion. It was perceived that this approach also provided a good opportunity for key contacts to be introduced to NQTs, and vice versa.

> 'In the first two weeks [of an NQT year] it will be a focus on 'welcome to your school and welcome to your new class'. Never mind about teaching, it is all about routines, control, getting to know your children…There is a workshop around parents evening, one around data drop, this is how you do assessment, and how you make those judgements. Then after the one on data, there is a workshop on what it actually means, and why we do this. There are wider things too, like how do schools know how to develop, why do we worry about Ofsted, what do school improvement partners do, how do school leaders know what to choose next [for priorities], so that [NQTs] get a more rounded understanding of how schools work'. (Primary senior leader, HEI undergraduate route)

NQT mentors and coordinators/tutors carried out similar roles to subject and professional mentors during ITT placements. They met with NQTs, although these meetings appeared to be less regular and consistent than those scheduled for trainees. Often, NQT meetings would be arranged on a needs basis, and sometimes as part of a group session rather than one-to-one time. NQTs generally felt well supported by their mentors and NQT coordinators/tutors, and understood that they could approach members of staff if they had queries or questions. It was felt by NQTs that evidencing requirements were less compared to their ITT experience, and that the onus shifted onto the mentor in terms of providing written reports of evidence to appropriate bodies.

The level of involvement of training providers in the induction of NQTs was varied amongst those interviewed, as this was the remit of appropriate bodies. Some training providers had built guidance regarding NQT induction processes into the end of ITT programmes. Several gave NQTs access to training sessions and kept in touch with them via email or social media, and were available for supportive conversations with NQTs should an 'independent ear' be required. Where they used online systems, some providers created areas accessible by NQTs that contained materials, video clips and guidance to support their transition. Some had tried to organise conference days or other alumni gatherings and found there were low-levels of take-up from NQTs. NQTs themselves, where they mentioned these events, often reported that they did not find them helpful and stated that they preferred training on specific issues rather than opportunities to meet other NQTs (as they could already access the latter in their school settings through the use of buddy systems).

This reflected that many schools, and particularly Multi-Academy Trusts, had created internal NQT induction and training programmes and buddy systems to support transition, and therefore individuals were already able to meet other NQTs working and sharing experiences in the same settings. These internal programmes were also reducing the demand for this type of formal support from training providers or appropriate bodies.

> '[The NQT year] is seen as the beginning of training rather than a discrete standalone year. There's an expectation of lifelong learning and development within schools, at the end of induction there will be a program of CPD, that's hugely beneficial to the NQTs and also for the schools, by the nature of doing that they have upped support for NQTs – think it exceeds expectations of statutory guidance. A lot of our schools are doing far more'. (Appropriate body)

A few senior leaders noted that school administration teams shared some of the workload in relation to NQT induction, for example by ensuring that all the appropriate safeguarding requirements were met, and that NQTs were set up on school IT systems, received name badges and any other equipment required.

3.4 The changing role of the school-based mentor

Many mentors spoke about the way in which, over the course of a training placement, their role would become more akin to 'coaching' rather than mentoring. This was most common in the Teach First route where trainees were with the same school for two years, or for placements delivered later in the training year, or during NQT years. In these contexts, it was felt that the coaching role offered more chance for discussion and sharing ideas of how to develop and progress. However, mentors were also aware that their own style and approach would change depending on the length of time they had been carrying out the role, or the nature of the trainee/NQT they were working with.

> 'I think my style of mentoring has probably changed over the years. I think that is probably more to do with my experience of being a mentor and also of working with other colleagues…The more people you work with and as you progress, in terms of leadership roles, you develop a style that will work well with one person and wouldn't be effective with somebody else. You have to adapt how you might work with them'. (Secondary mentor, Teach First)

Most NQTs noted that the type and volume of support provided by their mentor changed between the trainee and NQT year. NQT meetings with mentors were less likely to be prescribed, and the frequency varied from weekly to half-termly depending on the needs of the individual NQT, the approach taken by the mentor, and the requirements set out by appropriate bodies. This was not dependent on the ITT route that the NQT had experienced, and could vary within school settings (i.e. mentors from different departments within the same school were found to offer different frequencies of meetings/support).

> 'It is a mix of formal and informal support for NQTs. It is not a case of constantly monitoring and scrutinising, it is about making sure that at key points in the term there is a clear snapshot of how that person is progressing towards the Teachers' Standards, and then in between times there is the more informal kind of support and mentoring'. (Senior leader and mentor, HEI postgraduate)

One school offered 'ten minute mentors' to trainees and NQTs to address specific areas of teaching practice: 'We have a team of mentors ..if someone has an issue [they] will go in at an agreed time and lesson…watch the lesson for ten minutes and that same day give feedback [on]…the one thing to try in this lesson. [The trainee or NQT tries] that and then the mentor goes back to see how it is going' (Teach First, secondary senior leader)

3.5 Other forms of support that worked well

In addition to the crucial role of mentoring, interview participants of all types identified a range of support activities that were perceived to be effective for trainees and NQTs. Again, these were common to the range of ITT routes.

- **Buddy systems:** These were implemented in many schools, whereby individuals would be paired together to support each other during their early careers. Buddy systems were commonly reported in schools as a support network for NQTs. In secondary schools, NQTs were often buddied with another NQT or early career teacher in a different department so that practice could be shared across the school. In some cases, an NQT would be paired with a trainee from the same route. Senior leaders reported that this benefited the NQT in seeing how far they had developed since their training year, whilst giving trainees a model of where they were moving towards.

- **Peer networks:** Often created in schools, these included sharing lunches or other times when trainees/NQTs would meet together to share their learning, read a piece of research together and discuss how it fits into their own practice, attend journal clubs where they shared the reflective process, or developed trainee-led research projects. If there were several NQTs in one school, internal training sessions would be arranged to bring them all together. Providers and senior leaders across all routes felt that individuals were less likely to withdraw from their training early if there was more than one trainee in a setting at any given time, because they could draw on these additional networks for support. Some providers were reported to have social media groups for trainees to connect with one another, access ideas and discuss areas requiring support. One of the benefits that providers felt this offered was the immediacy of the support.

Peer support

A primary school senior leader mentioned that having three NQTs in the school at the same time had worked very effectively, as it meant that the NQTs were able to support each other. Although the NQTs were placed in different year groups and had different mentors, the school had timetabled their NQT time together. This allowed them to meet as a group each week to discuss their progress and any issues, undertake their training together and offer each other support. To enable this to happen, the school had some teachers who were not assigned to a specific class, so that they could cover the NQTs' non-contact time (School Direct).

- **Clear communications:** Providers and senior leaders commonly reported that an influencing factor on the success of a trainees' placement was how effective and clear the communication and collaboration was between the different strands of support available (provider, senior leader, mentor). Where messages from each were conflicting, or one of the strands was not as clear or responsive as others, it was felt this could have a negative impact on the progress of the trainee during a placement.

- **Embracing the trainee as a member of staff:** This was noted by senior leaders participating in school-based routes, where they said that they had tried to instil a whole school sense of responsibility for teacher training. This was demonstrated through small details, such as safeguarding badges and lanyards stating 'student teacher' rather than 'visitor', or the name of the student being placed on a classroom door alongside that of the host teacher (who was commonly also the mentor, but not always). It was felt that such approaches made a difference in showing directly how the school acknowledged and welcomed the trainees, which promoted positive working relationships between colleagues. In addition, for senior leaders participating in the HEI-led routes, this time that trainees spend in placements and with school staff was regarded as a critical aspect of the training overall, as it meant that trainees were able to develop the skills to recognise pupil requirements and backgrounds, deal with behavioural issues and understand the range of needs that needed to be accommodated in one classroom.

  > 'For the first day…we meet them 15 minutes earlier than all other staff, buddy them with an experienced member of staff from another department, we walk in together so they are not stood looking like a fish out of water…At the end of each term or half term, instead of getting someone to come in and talk about [different aspects of provision] we use it as a reflection session: what have been your challenges, what has been the mountain you thought you wouldn't make but you have, what have you learned. [In] those sessions …[staff] are very open and people are honest, they trust each other, because we make it open and honest from the start'. (Secondary senior leader, Teach First)

- **Newsletters and bulletins from providers:** Where they were received or mentioned, mentors and senior leaders said that they appreciated news bulletins from providers as a useful format for reference. These were generally distributed by providers on a weekly or half-termly basis and included key information regarding deadlines for paperwork, tasks to be completed in school or links to recent relevant research. HEI providers included a summary of the subjects to be covered at university that week/term, with guidelines of what could be looked at in school, or how to link the theoretical training to curriculum delivery. A small

number of senior leaders and mentors reported that these newsletters from providers had stopped and they missed this information.

> 'We used to have a weekly newsletter from the provider with all the information on about deadlines, reviews, what the trainee deadlines were, possible areas to discuss in the mentor meetings. The newsletter has now gone for some reason, but it was quite useful. It made you feel you had a bit more of a handle on things… Now I might be pushing the trainees to [focus on a specific task], and tomorrow they may have an assignment due and I don't know that. So, the newsletter was important'. (Secondary mentor, HEI postgraduate route)

3.6 Challenges in providing support

Where there were gaps and challenges identified in relation to the support mechanisms in place for trainees and NQTs, as with other aspects of support, these very commonly related to the mentoring relationship.

It was emphasised by mentors, and their senior leaders, that the support they provided went well beyond the required hourly meeting per week, and often comprised daily informal support answering queries, dropping in to perform short lesson observations, writing reports, reviewing evidence, and liaising with school staff about specific training or development areas for trainees and NQTs. This created challenges for their own workload (see section 5 for challenges in hosting trainees and employing NQTs).

> 'Over the course of the week, one hour is set aside for formal mentor meetings. There are also about 45-minutes to an hour of informal conversations about their lessons, sorting out their plans for the next week. For a good trainee and a trainee that is doing all right, this model of support works. For a trainee that needs more help with planning a lesson from scratch, even though they have been teaching for a while, then no it isn't enough time'. (Secondary mentor, HEI postgraduate route)

Mentors commonly reported that they were not always granted release time from school to attend training sessions offered to them by providers. To counter this issue, some providers, particularly those offering school-based routes, said that they tried to deliver in-school training when mentors had not been able to attend their training days. However, a small number of providers had stopped delivering in-school sessions due to budgetary constraints.

Finding time for mentoring

A senior leader participating in School Direct described how they had been 'creative' with cover arrangements in order to enable mentors and trainees to meet. For example:

- Meetings and support time would be timetabled to coincide with extended assemblies so as to release teaching staff.
- A sports coach was employed to cover PE lessons and free up staff time.
- Senior leaders would cover lesson time so that mentors and trainees could meet regularly.

In some cases, trainees/NQTs and mentors found it difficult to meet on a regular basis. This was not generally an issue where the meetings were timetabled as protected time, but in the schools where they were not, the regularity and consistency of mentor meetings appeared to vary widely (for example if the mentor was called to cover other classes). This was not a challenge specific to one route, but dependent instead on school context. Where meetings had not taken place, trainees did note that the time with the mentor was usually caught up the following week. However, in a small number of cases this lack of time had meant that lesson observations had not been carried out by the mentor, or several meetings had been missed and not caught up, and as a result the required evidence had not been signed off for the trainee.

In addition, several mentors suggested that it would be helpful if they could meet more regularly with other mentors, for example those undertaking the role in a different subject in the same school, so that they could share practice and develop their own skills.

3.6.1 Varying support from training providers

Although training providers said that they offered training and support in relation to the collection of evidence (e.g. to help trainees manage their workload), trainees often perceived that there could be inconsistencies or a lack of clarity in terms of the deadlines and evidencing requirements they were expected to meet.

Some trainees reported that visits to placements carried out by providers were not always attended by the same ITT tutor each time. They felt that this lack of continuity in support created an additional lack of clarity, for example in terms of observation requirements, when they took place and who was involved (and when asked directly, trainees were sometimes unsure of how many observations or visits would be taking place, and who would be involved). If the provider ensured that its tutor was a designated, named contact who regularly worked with certain schools, mentors and trainees felt that the tutor would get to know the individuals involved and how they

worked much better. Consequently, it was felt that ITT tutors would be able to offer more holistic support.

Commonly, training providers offered a range of training sessions, lectures, seminars and guidance materials to school staff and trainees, and these were made available across all training routes. Although school staff perceived the provider meetings and training sessions to be useful, training was often challenging to attend as a result of time or budgetary constraints. Some senior leaders had devised strategies to address these issues, for example by ensuring that one member of staff attended a training session and then disseminated the appropriate information to the wider school workforce.

> 'Some providers run the [training/information meetings] on a subject basis, which is less of a hit for us in terms of mentors all being out at the same time. Another provider [runs meetings for all mentors] at the same time slot regardless of subject…For one of the meetings, I went and represented all three mentors, took notes and then I met with the mentors and fed back what had occurred in that meeting. Going forward, we might do it on a…rotational basis between the three mentors so that it is not such a cover hit for us as a school' (Secondary senior leader, HEI postgraduate)

3.6.2 Varying support from appropriate bodies

When asked about the support they offered, appropriate bodies described:

- **Training for schools:** for example, to ensure NQTs were following statutory processes, training packages for induction tutors and other school-based mentors of NQTs such as soft skills courses for handling difficult conversations, giving constructive feedback, and dealing with conflict.

- **Additional support for schools where NQTs are struggling:** for example, action plans of areas to be addressed, follow-up visits to support target setting and suggest training needs, and extending induction time if required.

- **Training for NQTs:** depended on the package of support purchased by schools, and varied by appropriate body. Some stated that one training day per term per NQT was included in the induction package, but additional training (including for tutors/mentors) would be charged separately.

However, the relationships that schools described with appropriate bodies were particularly variable. Although appropriate bodies were able to explain during interviews the types of work that they did with schools and NQTs, senior leaders and induction tutors/mentors generally reported that they did not have much contact from appropriate bodies until reports were due for submission. For example, there was limited evidence from school staff that appropriate bodies played a role in the overall quality assurance of

the support provided to NQTs and their experience in school, or that they were providing training opportunities for NQTs.

In contrast appropriate bodies stated that they undertook quality assurance in schools, although where they were responsible for a large number of NQTs (e.g. several hundred) they acknowledged that it was not possible to make visits to all of them. Therefore, appropriate bodies sometimes described how they targeted resources to those NQTs identified as being 'at risk' of not passing the year. However, the targeted support they described was focused on ensuring schools had supplied adequate support, rather than the delivery of additional training.

> 'If [an NQT is] flagged up as being at risk, we make it clear [that the school] needs to tell us as soon as possible, and then we arrange to visit the school…We have a set pattern for visits. We meet the NQT, meet the tutor, both for circa 30 minutes, we meet the head or induction coordinator, and check induction processes are being followed. [We] talk to the school about what the issue is and how they intend to support the NQT to meet standards'. (Appropriate body)

> 'We have a support plan, which is completed by the school and they say which standards are the problem, what exactly the problem is, and how they intend to help and what the NQT needs to do…For six weeks [this plan is] reviewed weekly, and at the end of six weeks we see if [the support needs to] continue or [if the NQT is] back on track…Sometimes if [the risk continues] I may need to go back and visit again'. (Appropriate body)

Several senior leaders and mentors mentioned that their contact with the appropriate body was only at an administrative level, i.e. for the purposes of termly reporting. They did not think that the appropriate bodies prescribed the type or level of support that the school should be providing to NQTs. Others were unclear on the expectations of appropriate bodies more generally. However, appropriate bodies reported that overall, schools did meet their expectations (see section 4).

Mentors and NQTs appeared to have less contact with appropriate bodies than senior leaders. Many NQTs were unaware of the role of appropriate bodies, and did not think that they had any direct contact.

> 'I am not sure if the appropriate body gets involved unless you say [that NQTs] aren't making satisfactory progress'. (Primary mentor, School Direct)

A small number of mentors commented that they did not personally liaise with the appropriate body, but that there were training coordinators or senior leaders within their school who guided NQT mentors regarding expectations, deadlines and responsibilities and who liaised with the appropriate bodies directly.

Nonetheless, a small number of senior leaders and mentors had close relationships with appropriate bodies (both local authorities and teaching schools). Where these relationships worked well, senior leaders said that they felt able to ask appropriate bodies for support, and the school would contact the appropriate body regularly if they needed advice or if there were concerns regarding an NQT, particularly if school staff felt they had done everything possible internally to support them and required additional guidance on the correct procedures to follow. There was also support from some appropriate bodies in relation to report writing, joint observations and feedback. Some noted that they had more liaison with the appropriate body after the appropriate body had restructured the support they offered into a tiered package, from which the school could purchase the most suitable level of support to meet its needs.

Several comments were made by senior leaders about their confusion in knowing which types of support different appropriate bodies offered, the costs involved, and which appropriate bodies actually worked in their areas. Many were unaware that there was a choice of appropriate bodies available to them. It was thought that a directory of the appropriate bodies and a service list would help senior leaders to make informed decisions regarding the level of support they purchased (see section 6).

4. Evidencing and quality assurance: implications for workload

This section details the evidencing and quality assurance processes put in place by providers and schools throughout ITT placements, and then during NQT induction and development.

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Summary of key points

Training providers and appropriate bodies were able to describe the range of expectations that were set in terms of trainee placements, NQT induction/training, the support systems that schools should put in place for both cohorts, and the evidencing requirements for each.

Evidencing requirements were flagged by all interviewee types as being a challenging aspect of both ITT and NQT experiences, due to the variety of evidence required, the amount of evidence required, and the different approaches that individual training providers and appropriate bodies took to these. Although evidencing was perceived by all interviewee types to be a time-consuming process, they also regarded it as a necessary aspect of training and development for teachers.

Where evidencing was collated and submitted via paper-based systems, these were perceived to be much more onerous and time-consuming processes for both trainees/NQTs and their mentors. For example, there were reports of evidence being duplicated across several different folders.

Attempts had been made by some schools, providers and appropriate bodies to reduce the burden of evidencing requirements on trainees, NQTs and their mentors. Electronic systems and software to support evidencing were generally perceived to save time, reduce workload and encourage more regular and consistent tracking of progress by mentors, link tutors or NQT coordinators.

Gaps in trainee and NQT understanding as to what constituted evidence were identified by training providers, school staff and appropriate bodies.

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4.1 Setting expectations

4.1.1 Expectations for trainees

Providers across all routes set out their requirements and expectations in relation to the minimum level of support, mentoring, observations and evidencing to be made available to, or undertaken by, trainees. Evidencing requirements, formats and processes were also generally driven by providers. They would be prescriptive about the points in the term or year when trainees should have different experiences of school-based activities, or where they should cover specific learning topics or Teachers' Standards. However, this created challenges for trainees and their mentors where provider-stipulated requirements did not tally with school timetables (see section 5).

Providers were also prescriptive about the ways in which trainees could be deployed in schools, in order to mitigate the risk of trainees being viewed as an additional teaching assistant or 'extra pair of hands'. Instead, providers stated that schools were required to encourage trainees to develop their own teaching skills over time. In addition, many providers set out requirements and expectations of how the mentor and host teachers (where they were not also the mentor) should work with trainees.

Although providers drove requirements, in several cases senior leaders and providers explained that their working relationships were more fluid than this.

> 'I find that when the mentor sits with the link tutor [from the provider] and has a conversation…that expands into different areas and goes into different directions…It is better than typing it up on a piece of paper that is just going to be filed… In a three-way conversation….[the provider can] get feedback to them (the trainee) and to me (the mentor)… And I feel this is more powerful than just typing and recording just for the sake of the folder'. (Primary mentor, HEI undergraduate route)

To help school staff and trainees meet expectations, providers would commonly distribute guidance and handbooks that included proformas and templates for recording evidence, and they encouraged trainees and mentors to use these, or provided online systems for doing so (see section 4.2).

In terms of the support available to trainees in collecting their evidence, senior leaders, mentors and trainees were consistent in their view that there was some direction from providers about the amount and type of support the school should be providing to the trainee.

'We would expect the classroom teacher [or mentor] to be a non-judgemental critical friend for the trainee. This keeps the relationship supportive [and] helps with the trainee's development'. (Primary provider, SCITT)

Commonly, the range in requirements – including from different providers delivering the same training route – created confusion and challenge for some senior leaders.

'I have noticed…that different ITT providers are asking for different numbers of [timetabled teaching] hours [for trainees on the same route], which has been a bit tricky. I thought their requirements would all be the same, which would be a better way to do it as there would be more parity. I have one PGCE trainee from [provider A] who is doing more hours than [the trainee with provider B] by the end of their placement…I feel that might be putting extra pressure on [the trainee with provider A]'. (Secondary senior leader, HEI postgraduate route)

Trainees sometimes reported that they were not always clear as to the number of observations being carried out, or who would be attending them, as these tended to vary by provider and individual school. A small number of senior leaders and mentors on HEI-led routes mentioned that expectations were best clarified between the HEI tutors and trainees at an initial meeting. This offered an opportunity to be realistic about what expectations there were for each person involved, the amount of time and support they would offer and the responsibilities of the trainee in return.

4.1.2 Expectations for NQTs

Appropriate bodies were responsible for ensuring statutory guidance was adhered to during the NQT year.[21] They reported that the working relationships that they developed were focused on school staff (senior leaders and induction tutors/mentors) and NQTs. Appropriate body contact with school staff tended to entail the provision of information (e.g. in relation to training), clarification of statutory processes, and liaison with schools to arrange visits. Advice, guidance and additional support/training was also delivered where requested by schools, for example where NQTs were experiencing challenges.

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[21] See: DfE (2018), *Induction for newly qualified teachers: Statutory guidance for appropriate bodies, headteachers, school staff and governing bodies*.

Six appropriate bodies were interviewed during this research. They described the expectations that they set out for schools and NQTs. These were broadly similar and comprised:

- **Observations:** a minimum number of observations of the NQT to be carried out in school (e.g. at least six per year), and in addition, the minimum number of peer observations that NQTs should carry out in the course of their own development.

- **Targets:** professional development targets, to be tracked, amended and updated over the course of the induction period.

- **Non-contact time:** to be protected and clearly shown on NQT timetables, so that it is clear how that time should be spent (i.e. on professional development rather than teaching tasks such as marking and planning).

- **Evidence collection:** a statutory requirement, but also encouraging reflective practice.

Although appropriate bodies detailed that information and support was on offer to NQTs directly, when asked during the interviews, the NQTs (across all routes) were generally unaware that this was available to them via appropriate bodies. They commonly looked instead towards school-based mentors and induction tutors/coordinators, as they had done during their ITT years. In addition, the feedback during interviews with school staff regarding the relationships with appropriate bodies was particularly variable (see section 3.6.2).

4.2 Recording evidence

The amount of evidence required from trainees and NQTs varied considerably, and this appeared to be dependent on approaches to reporting and recording evidence by providers and appropriate bodies, rather than the training route taken. This variation did, at times, create challenges for schools in terms of management and administration.

> 'It varies by provider. Some will say you have to have a weekly observation, some will say if a trainee is teaching the teacher has got to be in the class at the same time. Others will say, oh no, [the trainees] have got to get used to being in the classroom on their own. [The trainee and senior leader] will [meet] every two weeks, which makes my job more difficult keeping on top of it all, and all the paperwork is different as well'. (Primary senior leader, HEI postgraduate route)

Generally, evidence requirements were felt to be challenging for trainees and school-based mentors (compared to those reported by NQTs), but it was acknowledged by all interviewee types that although these processes were time-consuming, they were regarded as necessary in meeting requirements and to show the progress and

development of trainees and NQTs. A small number of trainees and NQTs also said that it boosted their confidence to review and reflect back on their evidence over time, as it highlighted the amount of progress they were making.

Online resources

Training providers used online resources in three key ways:

- Repository for formal records of evidence, observations and meeting reports. The ITT tutor, mentor and trainee would all be able to access the same system and view the uploaded records.
- Area for mentors and trainees to add reflective observations to support development.
- Source of training materials, handbooks and guidance that were available for all to access and reference when necessary or convenient. Some providers also used this as a tool through which to provide ongoing support for NQTs.

Trainees reported that uploading evidence and reporting online made communication with their mentor a more efficient process and allowed both the school and the trainee to feel confident that there was a shared understanding about assessment requirements. It helped trainees to ensure that they were targeting areas of practice that were relevant to them weekly, rather than waiting for tutors and mentors to look through physical folders.

Where ITT tutors could access reviews, lesson feedback and records of mentor meetings virtually, it allowed the provider some degree of quality assurance. They said that they could virtually monitor assessment and evidence but also ensure the required support was taking place in terms of mentor meetings and lesson observations. Sometimes, if a trainee was struggling or starting to get into difficulty, the tutor could determine this from the electronic weekly records and step in early to help support the process. Thus, electronic assessment and evidencing was a tool for maintaining dialogue with students and mentors much more than paper-based evidence could be.

With the aim of reducing workload, some schools, providers and appropriate bodies were streamlining evidence collection processes, often through the use of online systems and software. For example, evidence could be completed on a computer or mobile device and uploaded directly to a shared area that the mentor/induction tutor/coordinator, trainee/NQT and provider/appropriate body could all access. Where evidence requirements were still heavily paper-based, they were reported by all interviewee types to be onerous. Likewise, the trainees and NQTs required to use online systems and software to record their evidence were more likely to state that this approach saved time and reduced their workload, compared to the experience of those recording paper-based evidence. Trainees and NQTs also noted that using electronic systems was more

sustainable and cost-effective in terms of school resources (e.g. reducing printing and photocopying), although uploading evidence was still felt to be time-consuming.

4.2.1 What constitutes evidence?

There was mixed feedback across all routes in terms of the ease with which trainees and NQTs were able to identify the sort of material that would constitute evidence and meet provider requirements; mentors also highlighted that this was not always clear.

Understanding evidence

ITT providers offered a range of approaches to support trainees develop their understanding of evidence requirements.

- Training providers delivering the School Direct and SCITT training had developed set formats and proformas for evidence, and trainees and their mentors were encouraged to use them. School staff reported that use of these forms ensured that all evidence was completed to the provider's expectations.

- School-based and HEI-led training providers had developed online learning environments onto which they uploaded guidance resources for trainees (video clips, tutorials) to access at any point. They also felt that these resources helped mentors and trainees to talk to one another effectively, collect evidence without burdening workload, and improve progress tracking because guidance and evidencing processes were shown to be purposeful. Where they were available to them, trainees commonly appreciated electronic systems for recording evidence, as they reduced duplication of effort (see section 4.2).

- An HEI postgraduate provider led a seminar with trainees on what the word 'evidence' meant, giving examples and template forms to review with their mentors. After the first placement, there was another seminar where trainees shared practice and feedback of what they had done and the evidence collected.

- Providers of the undergraduate ITT route delivered professional development modules prior to placements commencing. These modules covered two elements; aspects of assessment such as how to collect evidence, what sort of paperwork is needed, how to set up folders for evidence and practical skills based on the standards, for example supporting trainees in behaviour management, and differentiation.

Trainees on HEI-led routes noted that seminars were more helpful than lectures in terms of developing understanding of evidence, as they promoted discussion and sharing ideas.

Some interview participants from both school-based and HEI-led routes, including trainees and school senior leaders, felt that evidence itself was open to interpretation as Teachers' Standards could look different according to the setting in which they were applied, or individuals could interpret the evidence collated differently.

For example, a trainee on the HEI undergraduate route felt that ITT tutors had interpreted guidance differently, with one tutor suggesting that the trainee had collated adequate evidence to enable progression, and another tutor disagreeing with this assessment.

To mitigate these challenges, several senior leaders (across HEI-led and school-based routes) had implemented quality assurance processes such as establishing designated ITT coordinators or senior leaders carrying out observations to ensure mentor meetings were being led appropriately, and that assessment and evidencing was consistent.

There were specific Teachers' Standards reported by trainees and NQTs as challenging for identifying and providing appropriate evidence. Areas commonly mentioned were behaviour management, and communications with parents.

> 'I speak to parents every day, but I don't know how I can evidence that as it's not on a form. I have done it, but can't prove I have done it'. (Primary trainee, SCITT)

Several providers stipulated that trainees should be able to articulate to their mentors the progress they were making and the challenges they were facing, showing that they were practising self-reflection rather than relying on a checklist of tasks to sign off.

Appropriate bodies offered similar feedback, saying that it could be challenging to help NQTs understand what 'evidence' looked like.

> 'We [work closely with] NQTs who want to gather lists of things they've done rather than evidence of progress. That's not because they are not engaged in the process, it's because they find it hard to understand what [evidence] is. It's far easier to write down everything they have done and say that is progress – we challenge them to say 'what does that mean?', what is it about that which is helping you develop as a teacher?'. That's our biggest challenge in terms of meeting our expectations'. (Appropriate body)

To support the collection of suitable evidence, some providers and appropriate bodies created a grid of the Teachers' Standards, breaking the standards down into subsections, or offering an exemplified model of each.[22] On this, the trainee/NQT would record the specified number of pieces of evidence for each standard. The trainee/NQT could map a point to each standard to show where it was evidenced in their work (and for mentors and tutors to review). Other trainees/NQTs and mentors were given guidance documents offering clear examples of the kinds of evidence that could be used. Where they commented on these materials, trainees/NQTs found them helpful for harder to evidence standards, e.g. getting involved with the wider ethos of the school; they also reported that school-based mentors were fundamental in helping them understand and identify appropriate evidence.

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[22] It should be noted that the Teachers' Standards state that: 'The bullets, which are an integral part of the standards, are designed to amplify the scope of each heading. The bulleted subheadings should not be interpreted as separate standards in their own right, but should be used by those assessing trainees and teachers to track progress'. See: DfE (2013), *Teachers' Standards: Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies*, p.7.

4.2.2 Evidencing for trainees

Across the routes, trainees were tasked with collecting a large range of evidence. This included:

- **Examples of supporting documents:** such as lesson plans and seating plans, lesson observation reports.

- **Data:** submission of outcomes/progress data of the pupils in each class, examples of work in class books.

- **Administrative records:** evidence of telephone calls/letters to parents, notes from mentor meetings.

- **Reflective practice:** for example, through journaling, essays and commentary on other forms of evidence.

In addition to the evidence files and documentation, trainees completing a university course were given assignments and essays to complete during their programme.

Several trainees and their mentors highlighted that some of the evidence required was superfluous or out of touch with the reality of teaching (e.g. requirements to create several, detailed lesson plans per week when teachers generally did not take this approach to planning anymore).[23] Despite this, a small number of trainees that were required to create paper-based evidence files were positive about the process and felt that although it was time-consuming, it did inform their learning and development as it made them think closely about the Teachers' Standards and see their progress over time. Senior leaders, however, were concerned about the impact of collecting paper-based evidence plus writing weekly reflections against the Teachers' Standards on trainee workload – particularly where they were reaching the end of their training and had the responsibility and workload of a teaching timetable at 70% - 80%.

> 'Gathering evidence is great, but you have to be having good teaching experiences to be able to gather good evidence… I can see that the university needs to provide the evidence to their external examiners. Some of the students become so obsessed with what it looks like on paper, forgetting that it's what it looks like in the classroom that is important'. (Primary senior leader, HEI undergraduate route)

[23] This was also reported by NQTs and their induction tutors/mentors.

Quality assurance

Where trainees were struggling with meeting requirements, link tutors from training providers would often carry out additional visits, and meet with mentors and the trainees together, to identify where additional work was required. This included a range of activities depending on the challenges identified, such as: additional school visits from link tutors, mentor training, joint/moderated lesson observations involving the link tutor and subject mentor, meetings with professional mentors and trainees together, and reviews of evidence to identify gaps or where paperwork could be amended to ensure that evidence could be completed to the appropriate standard.

Evidence

The amount, and type, of evidence to be submitted appeared to differ according to the systems used by providers. These are summarised below (Table 8).

Table 8: Types of evidence commonly submitted via paper-based and online systems

Evidence: Paper-based systems	Evidence: Online systems
Commonly a range of physical evidence files, containing:	Evidence submitted via online software, and commonly comprising:
Core evidence file: collated through year, each piece of evidence relating to Teachers' Standards, assessments and planning evidence	**Training portfolio**: including all evidence against the Teachers' Standards (similar to the 'core evidence file')
Lesson observation file: containing all formal lesson observations forms/feedback	**Reflective logs**: completed by the trainee electronically throughout the course of a placement
Training notes file: notes from all training undertaken in school and centre-based	**Data and school records**: e.g. student outcomes/progress data, trainee timetable (copied across/imported from other school systems)
Best evidence file: the best pieces of evidence for each of the Teachers' Standards, used for final assessment	**Observation records and records of meetings**: often completed and uploaded to the system direct from mobile devices during observations. Included a separate space for the ITT tutor, mentor or trainee to make comment against anything uploaded (e.g. to highlight as evidence against different standards).
Year group teaching files: for secondary, with all evidence and information specific to each class, e.g. lesson plans, class lists, Pupil Premium pupils	

Evidence: Paper-based systems	Evidence: Online systems
Other files: files specific to provider/phase, such as Phonics files for primary trainees **Reflective log/journal**: completed by trainee each week, through which they were encouraged to reflect on their practice	

Mentors said that in addition to reports on progress and lesson observations, they reported on a range of factors such as trainee attendance at extra-curricular events, evidence of trainees' professional conduct around the school, findings from scrutinising work books and student assessments, and reviewing records maintained in the electronic folder.

The number and types of files varied for each provider, and for school-based routes often comprised a range of physical evidence files, although some school-based ITT providers were moving to online systems. Challenges occurred in paper-based evidencing where senior leaders, mentors and trainees felt that there was duplication in presenting the same evidence in different folders. Particular pressures were identified in the final term when trainees had also reached an 80% timetable and were completing paperwork and submitting final evidence. Some trainees undertaking school-based routes felt that, in comparison to their peers on HEI-led other routes, they were required to maintain and submit a greater amount of evidence.

Where collecting evidence was still a paper-based exercise, a small number of mentors noted that if a trainee forgot to leave the folder with them at the appropriate time, this could create challenges for them in gathering and submitting evidence reports to deadline. However, where challeges arose in the recording of evidence, providers across both school-based and HEI-led routes listened to feedback, and there were examples given of where evidence requirements had been amended to reduce the burden on schools and trainees.

Reviewing evidencing requirements

A School Direct provider had assessed all evidencing and reduced requirements, so that all the evidence submitted was reviewed as part of assessment processes (and not a record of training). To support this change, assessment criteria were weighted towards evidence collated through lesson observations and classroom-based practice.

'In previous years we asked for more evidence and we have stripped it back – training is tough anyway and we found that we were collecting info for the sake of it. If you have moderation processes in place and you can trust those processes the evidence is less relevant, [and there is] no need to generate lots and lots of evidence'. (Primary provider, School Direct)

An HEI training provider had changed their systems, reviewing paperwork requirements annually, tweaking templates where necessary, modelling and providing exemplars to students and mentors. Changes in assessment requirements or documents were then cascaded during provider-led mentor training at the start of the year. The ITT tutor provided additional support to mentors where necessary.

Previously, this provider required trainees to complete a weekly evaluation, which was felt to be repetitive and onerous for trainees. This had therefore been developed into an impact report to try and direct trainees' focus much more onto considering the impact they had pupils' learning and progress, rather than reflecting on their teaching. Trainees received guidance from the provider in structuring impact reports, such as focusing on developing pupil case studies, or whole class development over a period of time.

This impact report, alongside the assessment made by the mentor during observations and the weekly review of targets, becomes the bulk of the evidence that the provider requests. As such, assessment was moving away from a focus on teaching to looking comprehensively at learning instead. The provider felt that the completed report thus provided a strong indication of the level of reflection that the student could make on their own practice and its impact.

Several HEI providers had agreed that evidencing could predominantly be recorded through notes of meetings with mentors, or as part of observation reports where mentors had looked at work books, feedback and the trainees' impact on teaching and learning (more akin to the reports produced for NQTs). Evidence from professional dialogue during weekly mentor review meetings was collected and there was emphasis on evidence being identified through a collaborative process with the mentor, with trainees able to reflect and critique their own learning and the progress of pupils.

Engaging with schools to review provider training content

A primary provider engaged with their School Direct placement schools to review and re-structure their programme. This enabled the schools to feedback their challenges, concerns and improvements, which they said the provider had taken on board. The schools worked closely with the provider to review assignments, course structure, curriculum and paperwork. Senior leaders, mentors and trainees commented that the paperwork requirements had been much reduced the following year as a result.

'We went through the whole curriculum last year and unpicked what's useful, what works in a primary school, what we need. They [the provider] are very good at adding content and are really outward facing, really good at listening to what primary schools, training managers and the students themselves are saying'. (School Direct, primary provider)

4.2.3 Evidencing for NQTs

It was generally felt by all interviewee types that evidence requirements during the NQT year were less intensive than those experienced during the training year (across routes). The onus would instead be on mentors and senior leaders to produce reports for the appropriate bodies three times per year. These reports would include attendance/absence records, progress against the Teachers' Standards, and individual targets. Assessment against the Teachers' Standards was key and evidence could be provided through photographs, examples of work/homework set, moderation of books, learning walks[24] and lesson observations (making up the core part of mentor evidence).

NQTs themselves felt that evidence requirements were less intensive, but that this meant the support available to them was less structured, also.

> 'I think we had a lot more support with [evidence] last year when we knew that we had to submit the portfolio. I think this year it has been a bit more informal about documenting it in some kind of exact way. It would be quite helpful to have a folder or something, something that is online like…[the system] we used last year [during the training year]'. (Secondary NQT, Teach First)

[24] These are informal, short (approximately ten minutes) reviews of specific areas of classroom or teaching practice, carried out by a mentor and/or senior leader to share practice and support skills development. They tend to be conducted more frequently than formal lesson observations, with feedback discussed at the time rather than as part of formal performance management cycles.

With regard to assessment and evidence, NQTs were observed with varying frequency, once per half-term as a general average unless a specific need was identified. The mentors and NQTs said that they set targets relating to the Teachers' Standards based on feedback and from analysis of evidence. A termly report was written for the appropriate body from the evidence, targets and discussions of the Standards.

None of the NQTs interviewed could provide specific detail as to the requirements appropriate bodies set for evidence. All NQTs thought that the evidence had to be available in case the appropriate body wanted to moderate work at the end of the year, or as evidence of their potential if they struggled at any point during the year. Generally, NQTs did not feel the evidence requirements created workload issues for them, instead this was perceived to be created by the increased teaching timetable and responsibility.

However, the absence of guidance or consistency between appropriate bodies was raised by mentors and senior leaders. They suggested that more guidance would be useful, for example around effective practice in mentoring an NQT. Some schools were able to buy into training for mentors and NQTs, but not all appropriate bodies provided this routinely.

5. Benefits and challenges

This section explores the benefits and challenges of hosting trainees and employing NQTs reported by the range of interview participants.

Summary of key points

The perceived benefits and challenges of hosting trainees and employing NQTs were consistently reported across the different training routes and interviewee types.

Key benefits to hosting trainees and employing NQTs were:

- The injection of fresh ideas into the workforce, through energetic and enthusiastic people coming into the school and able to share up-to-date pedagogical knowledge and ideas.
- Promoting reflective practice among mentors and early career teachers, including mentors remaining mindful of the Teachers' Standards.
- Staff development for the existing workforce, e.g. leadership and development skills for mentors.

Common challenges were:

- Finding appropriate time to provide support and meet all placement/evidence requirements.
- Balancing evidence requirements with workload management.
- Ensuring that trainees and NQTs had realistic expectations about daily school life, thereby supporting their resilience in the role longer-term.
- Mentors feeling able to manage difficult conversations effectively.

School-based routes were perceived by school staff to provide a 'hands-on', 'immersive' and 'realistic' view of teaching, and offered the opportunity for trainees to make rapid progress. School staff also valued (across both HEI-led and school-based training routes) the links with current research communities and knowing that trainees were engaging with up-to-date pedagogy and evidence-based practice. However, several senior leaders and mentors identified skills and knowledge gaps in NQTs where there was a perceived lack of balance between pedagogical development and practical teaching skills, and where this occurred, NQTs said that they did not always feel prepared for teaching.

Feedback relating to the benefits and challenges of hosting trainees and employing NQTs was generally consistent across the different training routes and participant types. A range of benefits and challenges was identified, and the common findings are summarised below. Where there were differences in response among interview participants, these tended to occur at provider level, or be dependent on specific school contexts, rather than being determined by individual training routes. Where any benefits or challenges related specifically to school-based training or HEI-led provision, this has been noted.

5.1 Benefits of hosting trainees/employing NQTs

Trainees and NQTs were least likely to identify benefits for schools in employing or hosting them, and this was particularly the case where trainees had experienced challenging placements or felt unsupported by mentors or colleagues. Overall however, interview participants across all types (except the trainees and NQTs mentioned above) were able to identify a number of benefits and challenges of hosting trainees and employing NQTs, many of which echo the findings of the literature review (see Appendix 1).

Sharing new ideas, energy and enthusiasm: According to most interview participants, one of the main benefits to schools of hosting trainees and employing NQTs was having energetic and enthusiastic people coming into the school with up-to-date pedagogical knowledge. Generally, trainees and NQTs also felt that they brought fresh ideas and up-to-date pedagogy to the schools that they worked in.

Additional capacity: Senior leaders felt that participating in ITT brought additional capacity or expertise into schools that could enrich curriculum delivery in specialist subject areas and support the development of extra-curricular activities and clubs. Some senior leaders noted that, as part of professional enrichment activities, trainees had developed new teaching and learning resources for the schools in which they had placements, created banks of homework/independent learning activities, modified schemes of work, and devised model answers to support students at post-16 – all of which had been appreciated and received positively by the school staff involved. In addition, senior leaders noted that there was potential for pupils to receive additional support as a result of having trainees on site (e.g. trainees may deliver more focused intervention work with a small cohort, or assist with planning and marking); or, the presence of the trainee meant that there was more opportunity and capacity for a class teacher to undertake intervention work, or to catch up with marking and planning.

Engagement with research communities: Some senior leaders appreciated that HEI-led training routes (and connections with HEIs as part of the school-based routes) enabled schools to remain engaged with wider research, and to input into course

development (e.g. by highlighting content that may not be practicable in a school setting). Likewise, mentors mentioned being invited by HEIs to deliver subject specialist lectures/seminars. School staff therefore regarded these relationships with HEIs as positive collaborations. Some senior leaders described mutually beneficial arrangements, whereby specialist teachers delivered workshops in their areas of expertise for trainees (e.g. in assessment for learning using iPads and Quick Response (QR) codes), and in return HEI tutors would visit schools to deliver workshops or subject-based days for pupils.

Promoting reflective practice: Senior leaders across all routes commonly noted that trainee and NQT mentors had become more reflective of their own practice. Mentor feedback echoed this finding. In addition, providers and appropriate bodies perceived that the process of collecting evidence was a valuable process through which self-reflection could be encouraged among early career teachers. Self-reflection manifested among mentors in a range of ways, including remaining aware of the Teachers' Standards and applying them more consistently to their own classroom practice than they felt they would have done otherwise. Mentors also suggested that meeting with trainees and NQTs prompted them to review their own lesson planning, teaching styles and approaches, which they found to be a beneficial aspect of the role.

Developing the existing workforce: It was generally felt by senior leaders and mentors that the presence of trainees and NQTs in the school promoted staff development activities more broadly. This was particularly mentioned in relation to:

- Leadership and development skills, for example if staff were looking to progress to a role with Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR), mentoring was felt to be a good opportunity to develop skills in coaching, management and team leadership.

- Opportunities for CPD available from providers and within the school/MAT network as a result of being a mentor to trainees and NQTs.

- Development of skills in information technology. All school staff felt that it was beneficial to the existing workforce when trainees were up-to-date with developments in technology and software (e.g. for data tracking), and consequently were able to support existing teaching staff in developing their ability to use electronic systems effectively and efficiently.

- The promotion and improvement of existing staff relationships through the sharing of responsibility for ITT and NQT development, and the maintenance of collaborative partnerships with a range of external stakeholders, which could positively impact on the opportunities and activities available to pupils.

Supporting strategic recruitment: Echoing the findings of the literature review, several senior leaders, particularly those with trainees on school-based routes, acknowledged the opportunity to 'grow your own' staff or mould trainees into strong candidates for future

recruitment. They felt that the immersive nature of school-based training enabled them to work with trainees and NQTs to develop working practices aligned to the needs of a specific setting. Mentors and senior leaders participating in school-based routes most commonly said that these routes supported recruitment by helping to recruit teachers to schools that may otherwise not be considered due to their location and context.

Developing the next generation of teachers: All types of school staff spoke of the enjoyment they gained from supporting the sector and engaging with a new cohort of teachers. Many senior leaders and mentors believed that the development of a future generation of teachers was a core aspect and duty of school life. They enjoyed watching trainees develop their skills, being able to help shape the careers of the upcoming teaching workforce, and the close working relationships that the training and NQT experience engendered among existing colleagues.

Developing awareness of school contexts: All interviewee types participating in school-based training routes regarded this as an effective way of training teachers as it provided a 'hands-on', 'immersive' and 'realistic' view of teaching. Senior leaders, mentors and trainees subsequently felt that this promoted rapid progress among trainees and positive relationships between trainees and pupils, because the trainees were more engaged with daily school life.

> '[School-based ITT] works very well and you have a more realistic view of what being a teacher is like, you see the hours they are working, the challenges of dealing with parents. You see the whole package and find out more quickly if it's for you'. (Primary senior leader, School Direct)

5.2 Challenges of hosting trainees/employing NQTs

In addition to the benefits, a number of challenges were also identified in relation to providing ITT placements and employing NQTs. These commonly related to capacity, workload and managing the expectations of trainees/NQTs and any potential negative impact on students.

Lack of time: The challenge most commonly reported across all training routes and for the NQT year was a lack of capacity among senior leaders and school-based mentors to provide the level of support required. This covered a range of issues including the time required to conduct meetings and training, complete observations, assessments and administration. It was felt by all interviewee types (including providers and appropriate bodies) that this particularly affected school-based mentors, who would commonly undertake tasks in their own time (e.g. arranging meetings after school hours) to ensure adequate support was provided.

Releasing mentors: Finding sufficient time to release mentors for weekly meetings with trainees, and to timetable protected NQT time was a challenge for senior leaders. Where the mentor was also a class teacher, a few found it challenging to balance their own workload whilst meeting the support needs of trainees and NQTs. Where the mentor was a senior leader, they were often perceived to be too busy to make the meeting time, or the mentor PPA time did not match with the trainee's time off timetable. Thus, if the meetings were not protected in the timetable, they did not always take place.

Timetabling constraints: There were also strategic and management implications reported for allocating cover for NQT time, filling gaps in lessons where trainees/NQTs had arranged to observe other lessons or were attending external training sessions, finding appropriate space in the school calendar to arrange the different experiences required for meeting trainee and NQT evidence requirements, and identifying the appropriate lessons for trainees/NQTs to observe (particularly in small subject departments or during pinch points in the academic year, such as exam periods).

Balancing evidencing and workload: Senior leaders, mentors and trainees on both school-based and HEI-led training routes reported that the time taken to collect evidence was a challenge for trainees, reporting that some became overwhelmed with the workload involved. The subsequent need to provide additional support was then said to increase the workload burden on other school staff. Mentors noted that their own workload was impacted negatively when they needed to chase host teachers (who were not also mentors) for feedback on progress.

- Specific concerns in relation to workload management reported by senior leaders, mentors and trainees related to the duplication of evidence, additional pressure to complete paperwork and submit evidence towards the end of training when trainees were also responsible for 80% teaching timetables, the level and detail required for lessons plans that did not represent practices that would be implemented when teaching, and being required to submit essays and reports to training providers at 'pinch points' in the academic year.

- Several senior leaders, mentors and trainees across the different training routes indicated that paper-based evidencing processes were more likely to increase the workload of all individuals involved. Paper-based evidencing was thought to be more onerous, repetitive and time-consuming, and therefore less efficient than digital systems (e.g. when trainees were required to photocopy and tab all contents of each folder). Some felt that HEIs (and HEIs working with providers on school-based routes) were driving efforts to reduce the amount of paperwork and increase efficacy (see section 4 on evidencing). However, some trainees reported that when these workload issues were flagged to training providers, the requirements were not reviewed and reduced but instead ITT tutors would explain in more detail why trainees were being asked to collect the evidence required.

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- The impact on workload was felt to increase for NQT induction tutors during the NQT year. NQTs reported that collecting evidence increased their workload in addition to everyday teaching, although this was generally less onerous than that required during ITT placements. The workload burden was instead felt to shift onto NQT tutors and mentors.

Managing expectations: Several mentors, particularly those working with HEI-led routes, thought that the greatest challenge for many NQTs was that the longest placement experience they had often had, was approximately ten weeks. Thus, it was only when individuals transitioned to their NQT year that senior leaders and mentors felt they began to understand that they needed to keep work and energy levels consistent for an extended period of time. The amount of additional administrative tasks that NQTs might not have appreciated during training placements added to this challenge.

> 'There are bits of teaching that you didn't even realise existed when you were a student…although we try to give them the full experience …. When they are student teachers you cannot do those bits of the role in the same way that you do when they are your own class… [It is about the NQT] realising that actually, it is not just school experience that is tiring, teaching is tiring whilst you are getting used to it. It doesn't stop after ten weeks, you have to come back'. (Primary mentor, HEI undergraduate)

Skills gaps: Senior leaders and mentors felt that some skills gaps were apparent in terms of behaviour management (particularly among HEI-led training routes), which, for some, compounded a perceived lack of resilience among some trainees and NQTs. Several senior leaders and mentors also identified that trainees and NQTs found workload management challenging, particularly in relation to tasks additional to class-based practice (such as communications with parents), culminating in health and wellbeing issues. They felt that trainees and NQTs should be able to access more support networks related to wellbeing and managing work/life balance, to help them to develop these skills. During the interviews, ITT training providers generally did not mention offering resilience training.

Managing difficult conversations: School-based mentors highlighted that it could be challenging when they were required to have difficult conversations with trainees and NQTs, for example where performance was not as expected or the trainee/NQT was not integrating themselves fully into school life. Mentors did not always have training or previous experience in providing constructive feedback. They felt that the difficulties were often related to anxiety on the part of the trainee/NQT, and some suggested that this issue was more common with individuals who had not had any previous experience of working in a school either through volunteering or having an earlier role as a teaching assistant.

Balancing pedagogy and practical experience: Several NQTs said that they had not felt prepared for what it meant to be a teacher. Appropriate bodies also identified this challenge when supporting NQTs, noting their lack of experience in the range of tasks that a teacher undertook on a day-to-day basis, including letters, administration, and communications with parents, as well as a lack of familiarity with the processes that needed to be followed for marking and assessment. In addition, tasks and assignments set by providers did not always align with school timetables or activities taking place that term in school, therefore making it difficult for trainees/NQTs to develop their experience in those areas of school life. Several senior leaders and mentors noted knowledge gaps in NQTs as a result of these imbalances. These included:

- Subject knowledge gaps, particularly when asked to teach outside of a specialism (e.g. teaching across science rather than specifically chemistry or physics). Some NQTs highlighted that they found it challenging to teach subjects that they were not as familiar with.

- Lack of awareness of strategies to deal with English as an Additional Language, SEN or behavioural issues. Several NQTs highlighted SEN as an area where they felt they had the biggest concerns. Writing individualised education plans, differentiating for the range of needs and understanding generally what help different SEN pupils required were areas that NQTs felt that they needed to develop.

- Reduced knowledge of pedagogy. It was suggested by one senior leader and mentor that this could be developed through a piece of action research, with trainees researching different learning styles and comparing these to a cohort of pupils they worked with.

Potential negative impact on pupils: This was perceived to be a risk by senior leaders and mentors. It was often linked to the concerns of parents about trainees leading classes. Senior leaders commented that they would look at the potential impact on pupil cohorts of hosting a trainee, avoiding pupils being placed with a trainee over multiple years. A small number of mentors reported that where communications with parents were clear and consistent from the school, the number of concerns or complaints raised by parents about trainee teachers reduced. Negative reactions from parents were reported less by senior leaders participating in school-based ITT routes, particularly where schools regularly hosted trainees or employed NQTs.

> 'If you don't engage with the student placement you won't grow the profession, and we have an obligation to do that. At the same time, I have an obligation to the children to deliver good quality education and I need standards to remain high. So, if you take a student who is learning their craft, making lots of mistakes, that is going to impact on standards. There is a fine balance'. (Primary senior leader, HEI undergraduate route)

Lack of information on placement details: Senior leaders and mentors gave several examples where they had not been involved in the recruitment/placement process for trainees, or they had been informed late by providers of details (e.g. only a few days prior to the placement starting). They highlighted pressures this created in school in terms of ensuring the necessary resources, systems and safeguarding procedures were in place prior to the trainee's arrival. This was a particular challenge where the trainee had individual needs and schools were given a short amount of time (sometimes less than one week) to accommodate them.

5.3 Influencing factors

During the telephone interviews and case study visits, participants explored some factors that they perceived could affect the extent of the benefits and challenges experienced during ITT and NQT years. These influencing factors were generally related to contextual issues and drawn from individual experiences around school settings and working relationships, rather than feedback specific to a training model or route.

Meeting the needs of individuals involved: This was felt to be a major influence on the effectiveness of the mentor/mentee relationship, and therefore on a training placement/NQT year more broadly. Trainees and NQTs showed varied levels of confidence or aptitude for handling workload pressures. As a result, school-based mentors needed to be able to be flexible in approach in order to meet the needs of individual trainees and NQTs. Some appropriate bodies noted that career changers could find the NQT year a greater challenge than anticipated, where they struggled with the concept of being at the start of a career again.

> '[There needs to be] pastoral support, particularly for career changers, as it can be difficult for them to adjust to school…Ninety percent of [the work of the appropriate body in addition to statutory duties] has been around career changers. They need more coaching. We speak to schools to see whether there is more they can be doing to support these NQTs, particularly around behaviour management, such as observing more lessons'. (Appropriate body)

Timing of the ITT placement: For example, the first placement of a PGCE, first term of Teach First or first year of the undergraduate route were felt to be more demanding in terms of the time and resource required from schools. This was, therefore, also felt by senior leaders to reduce the benefits a school may gain from taking on the trainee at such an early stage in their development. Trainees were aware of this also, acknowledging that they had asked a lot of questions and recognised that they had taken more of their mentor's time than the hour per week allotted to them.

Previous experience of schools/specific settings: This was reported by several mentors and senior leaders as being a factor affecting the level of benefit from employing an NQT. Where NQTs had prior knowledge of a setting and had already participated in whole school CPD such as particular schemes for teaching phonics, this was perceived to reduce the length of time required to cover school processes and ways of working. In addition, some mentors and senior leaders felt that prior school experience (or having family members with experience of working in school) made a difference to positive engagement among trainees. It was thus perceived that trainees who had prior experience (longer than a two-week work experience placement) had a more realistic perspective regarding what the job was really like and the range of tasks required.

Provision of clear guidance: Mentors noted that the benefits were dependant on having very clear guidance from the provider from the beginning, and all documents being sent to the mentor/school by the appropriate body before the NQT year began. Deadlines being set in stone, tick lists to help mentors keep progress on track and exemplar material regarding what evidence could be collected and what reports should look like, were all important factors for mentors. Clear procedures for when things didn't run smoothly with a trainee or NQT were also valued.

Lack of quality assurance: This was generally noted by providers and some leaders. If the mentor was not performing adequately, this was recognised to have a profound impact on the trainee/NQT. Schools and training providers, therefore, felt it was important to have a supportive system of quality control to counter this. It was felt that positive relationships between providers and schools helped, with several layers of support in place and professional mentors overseeing or complementing the work of subject/classroom mentors. However, there was more variance in the quality assurance processes reported by schools to be undertaken by appropriate bodies in relation to NQT experiences. Although schools performed quality assurance internally via collaborative relationships between NQT coordinators, senior leaders and mentors, they did not always know whether appropriate bodies were carrying out quality assurance. During the interviews, appropriate bodies noted that they did not have the capacity to visit all schools and NQTs, and therefore resources were focused on cases where NQTs appeared to be struggling to meet expectations. This meant that quality assurance visits were not as consistent for NQTs as those taking place for trainees.

6. Perspectives on training and school careers

This section describes whether trainees and NQTs felt that their experiences met their expectations. This includes consideration of how ITT and NQT experiences may have influenced individuals' thoughts of teaching as a future career.

Summary of key points

Overall, most trainees felt that their training had met their expectations. This included the level of challenge and workload that they encountered. Where expectations were not perceived to have been met, this was generally attributed by trainees to a perceived lack of support, the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills and the lack of clarity in relation to evidencing requirements.

Similarly to trainees, NQTs also commonly reported that their expectations had been met although some felt that they had not been fully informed about their NQT year, what the expectations were and the range of additional administrative and pastoral tasks that they would be required to undertake as part of their teaching role.

Where they had experienced a gradual increase in timetabled teaching through their training placements, trainees noted that they felt less daunted about the level of workload in their NQT year. Indeed, some felt that evidencing requirements had lessened during their NQT year, freeing up time for their professional development.

Where trainees left courses early, this was attributed by school leaders to challenges with workload and work/life balance, and a lack of commitment to teaching as a vocation.

Most NQTs hoped that they would remain in their current school following their NQT year, and most trainees believed that they would remain in teaching. Some NQTs, however, were unsure that they would remain in teaching longer-term, due to the workload.

Interview participants of all types suggested that a range of areas could be developed further, including: increasing support and recognition for mentors, clearer information about the range of training routes, appropriate bodies and support on offer, more support for transition between ITT and NQT, and increased streamlining of provider requirements.

6.1 Expectations

6.1.1 Expectations of trainees

Overall, most trainees felt that their training had met their expectations. Many said that they had expected teaching to be very challenging with a heavy workload, and this had been the case. Trainees with no prior experience of schools felt that even though they had expected the workload to be challenging they had underestimated the intensity and impact it would have on their personal or family life.

> 'You get told but it is a completely different lifestyle to that you have lived before…I wasn't prepared for how hard and intense it would be'.
> (Secondary trainee, School Direct)

However, a small number of trainees had been prepared for a challenging experience and felt that their training had not been as intense as they had imagined. These trainees tended to be following school-based routes and had developed their early perceptions as a result of stories they read or saw across the media; they felt that the reality of the teaching role had not been as difficult to cope with as portrayed.

Where a small number of trainees felt that their expectations had not been met, their feedback covered a range of issues:

- **Lack of support**: This was a very common reason given where expectations were not met. Where they had a poor relationship with their mentor or they were the only trainee in a school, some trainees said that they felt more isolated during the experience than they had expected. They were also more likely to consider themselves a burden to other colleagues and less likely to identify benefits of their presence in schools.

- **Balance of theory vs placements**: Several trainees had either underestimated the amount of lecture-led content they would cover (school-based routes), or the amount of time they would spend in placements (HEI-led routes). In relation to the latter, some trainees on the HEI postgraduate route felt that lecture time and content was therefore not as in-depth as they had expected.

- **Evidencing and lack of clarity**: Some trainees thought that the paperwork requirements were greater than they expected (i.e. for evidencing). There was also some lack of clarity and variation reported in how schools interpreted evidencing requirements between placements.

Advice from trainees

Trainees were asked what advice they would give others to prepare them for their placements. They most commonly said that it was important to understand that they would make mistakes, or would have some challenging days, but that this was an important part of learning and development.

'It is ok for things to not go well…I kept thinking I can't make a mistake [but] I have learned more from things that haven't gone well than those that have. [It is] good to have development points'. (Teach First, primary trainee)

This led into others saying it was important to ask questions, and acknowledge to a mentor the times that were feeling more challenging than others. They also recommended connecting with other trainees and NQTs on the same training route, either face-to-face or via social media/provider networks.

Others gave practice tips relating to preparation for the role. These included:

- Carry out research in advance of a placement/start of an NQT year. This included trying to find out a school's process for marking and assessment, because this informed their planning as they knew what would be required.
- Focus on developing strong subject knowledge, as this can also support behaviour management where pupils respond positively to a teacher secure in their knowledge.

6.1.2 Expectations of NQTs

Overall, NQTs were satisfied with their experiences and felt well supported. Most NQTs felt that the experience of the NQT year had met their expectations at least to some extent.

Some NQTs transitioning from HEI-led routes reported that although they had received information from their university prior to the NQT year starting, they did not know what to expect until the first term started. This included a lack of knowledge about the amount of teaching they would be timetabled for, plus the need to complete pastoral and administrative tasks. In these cases, they did not feel that ITT had prepared them adequately for their NQT year and the additional expectations and workload that they would be required to meet. Some providers were already aware of this and making changes to their approach to meet these concerns.

'When we survey our trainees at the end of the year and ask them about areas where they feel they have done enough work, the one area that repeatedly comes up as lacking is the lack of engagement with parents and communication with home…We try to prioritise this now with the schools,

that wider aspect of the teaching job, not just classroom teaching. Part of this whole process is looking at teacher retention trying to make sure they have a real eye on what the job actually is before they…start the NQT in September and [feel shocked at] all the parent's evenings and other [tasks]; they have got to have that full picture". (Provider, HEI postgraduate)

In preparation for the NQT year, many trainees experienced a gradual increase in timetabled full-class responsibility over the course of their training to a maximum of 80% timetable by the end of the year (within this, the majority of secondary trainees' time was required to be timetabled in their specialist subject area). Where they had experienced this gradual increase in timetabled teaching, several NQTs noted that they had felt less daunted about the level of workload going forward.

NQTs who had undertaken school-based training routes more commonly reported that they had felt well prepared for what their role would be like as an NQT, as the majority of their training had been spent in school placements. Any mismatch in expectations tended to relate to the reduction in evidence-gathering in comparison to the trainee year, meaning that they felt more able to spend more time on teaching and learning.

Generally, the NQTs involved in the interviews said that they felt more established in school during their NQT year, and (for those not following the Teach First training route), they appreciated becoming responsible for their own class(es). These factors helped their confidence and performance.

6.2 Recruitment and retention

Overall, most trainees and NQTs felt that their training had been a positive experience where they had received the appropriate level of support. Where they had experienced trainees leaving their courses early, school leaders attributed this to the following core factors:

1. **Workload and work/life balance:** Some trainees reported that they had been unable to balance work and the impact on their own family life, the workload had required them to work in the evening and weekends and they had not been prepared for this. Trainees felt that this negatively affected their health and wellbeing. Sometimes senior leaders said that managing teaching workload and provider obligations (e.g. submission of essays to deadline) could be overwhelming for some trainees.

2. **Lack of commitment:** This was often attributed by senior leaders to trainees not having sustainable motivations for entering a teaching career. For example, they

had known trainees leave early where they had been motivated by a training grant/bursary rather than the role of teaching as a vocation.

HEI representatives were concerned that candidates no longer required prior school experience before commencing training. They reported trainees leaving early more often, or it was felt that these trainees often felt overwhelmed.

> 'School experience…is something we had always valued in an applicant - that they had been in to a school for a period of time so they had their eyes wide open about what teaching is. The directive was very clear that we were no longer allowed to insist that an applicant had school experience before the PGCE…that has been a challenge'. (Provider, HEI postgraduate route)

Most NQTs expected to remain at the same school following their induction year. In addition, most trainees felt that they would remain in teaching, or an education-related career such as policy or research. However, short-term and temporary contracts caused NQTs anxiety, as there was a perceived lack of security in these working arrangements.

A small number of NQTs and trainees were considering specialist teaching posts in areas such as special needs or teaching abroad. Those undertaking the undergraduate ITT route were more likely to say that they were actively networking with schools or working out during each placement which type of school they would want to work in for the longer-term.

However, there was some variation in responses when NQTs were asked whether they would remain in teaching longer-term. Where they were unsure, or did not think that they would, this was mostly related to workload and not knowing whether they would be able to sustain this over a longer period of time.

6.2.1 Perspectives on training routes

Overall, trainees and NQTs generally said that they would recommend their training route to others. However, some felt they would have taken a different route if they could make the decision again. For example:

- Some trainees taking the HEI-led postgraduate route felt that candidates interested in pedagogy and the theoretical background to teaching may prefer the undergraduate route so that they develop a more in-depth understanding of these concepts.

- Those on HEI-led routes suggested that some candidates might prefer the practically-orientated nature of school-based routes and that once they understood

more about it from hearing the experiences of other trainees, they might have chosen a school-based route if they had been more aware when making their own decisions.

- Conversely, those on school-based routes suggested that some trainees might prefer more 'traditional' HEI-led training, if they felt they needed to develop their pedagogical understanding or were concerned by the idea of the immediate teaching responsibility associated with school-led ITT.

6.3 Areas for development

There were a range of key areas that interview participants suggested for future development:

- **Increased support for mentors:** This was suggested very commonly by senior leaders and mentors. It included suggestions for more training, networking events, and sharing sessions to be made available to school-based ITT and NQT mentors (for example via ITT providers, appropriate bodies or in school settings). Senior leaders and school-based mentors felt that this would enable mentors to: become collaborative colleagues, share and develop best practice in relation to issues such as having difficult conversations, maintaining a professional and objective relationship with a trainee, developing mentoring into a coaching role, offering stretch and challenge to high-quality trainees and NQTs, and appropriate and personalised target-setting. However, a small number of interview participants noted that by increasing training or other requirements for mentors, this created workload challenges.

    'I realise that if you make mentor standards mandatory you raise a whole rack of other issues in schools in terms of finances and workload.' (Provider, HEI undergraduate route)

School-based mentors themselves suggested that they needed more protected timetable time to carry out the role, although they did not provide examples of how this could be achieved. Some felt that appropriate bodies should organise networking and training for NQT mentors across a local area/region.[25]

[25]Appropriate bodies have no statutory obligation to offer this support, nor is it listed in the induction guidance. However, they do have a responsibility to ensure that NQT induction coordinators are supported and trained. See DfE (2018), *Statutory Induction Guidance*

Developing best practice for mentors

- In order to develop best practice, one senior leader was looking to send their mentors to other schools to see how they worked elsewhere. They also planned to use directed time and staff meetings to allow staff to share and develop mentoring skills.

- Sharing practice was something that various clusters of schools already did. As well as collaborative working between mentors in the cluster, they shared joint inset opportunities for both mentors and trainees/NQTs. Some providers also held termly mentor meetings in local areas to help them to support each other and improve practice.

- Some leaders felt that coaching skills, as opposed to mentoring skills, especially where a trainee or NQT was struggling, needed further development.

- For one school, mentors were not particularly enthusiastic about having to travel to the provider venue for meetings or training, especially if this was after school. One senior leader attended training and disseminated findings back to staff. The senior leader thought that mentors could be encouraged to engage more in training and development if other forums for training could be used. For example, thirty minutes to one-hour webinar sessions or a conference call between the provider and the school.

- **Increased recognition for the mentoring role**: All types of interviewee suggested that there should be more professional recognition of the important role that ITT and NQT mentors undertake. For example, it was commonly suggested that this recognition could be achieved through accreditation, raising the profile of mentoring standards, and ensuring that schools have appropriate resource to release mentors to attend training and networking events.

  > '[Mentors] invest an enormous amount of time and effort and energy into getting the participants through it. And the research that goes with that to underpin their practice. It would be nice if that was recognised with accreditation of some type… what they are doing already is really above and beyond what we should expect'. (Secondary senior leader, Teach First)

  A small number of senior leaders paid their mentors for the time they spent undertaking the role. One gave a proportion of the payment from the provider to the mentor in acknowledgement of the work that they were doing and the effort they were putting into it.

- **Information and awareness about training routes:** Senior leaders felt that there needed to be clearer and better signposting to information (for both school staff and potential trainees) about the different training routes available and the structure of each. This was supported by the finding that several trainees on HEI-

led routes did not learn about the structure and content of school-based routes until they heard peers on these routes describing them.

- **Awareness of appropriate bodies and their role:** NQTs commonly reported that they did not know what (if any) support was available to them from appropriate bodies, and many senior leaders did not know they could review their choice of appropriate body. It was subsequently suggested by several senior leaders that more information for schools regarding the appropriate body offer (e.g. CPD for NQTs and mentors, networking opportunities) and associated costs would be useful.

7. Conclusion

Overall, interview participants of all types (including trainees and NQTs) were positive about teacher training and NQT development; in many examples, school staff reported a sense of responsibility and professional obligation for developing the next generation of teachers. Trainees and NQTs commonly felt that their experience had met their expectations, and although they raised concerns about workload management in the longer-term, most trainees and NQTs participating in the research believed that they would remain in teaching.

School staff talked about providing a significant level of support to trainees and NQTs, and ensuring that they experienced a supportive and reassuring environment where colleagues were approachable and helpful. In some cases, this was emphasised through a 'whole school' approach to training and NQT induction, with all school staff encouraged to engage with trainees and NQTs and help support their progress. Thus, minimum expectations and requirements were generally met by schools, although finding time for mentor meetings during placements and providing variations in teaching experiences created timetabling challenges.

Whilst this study focused on exploring several teacher training pathways, the findings (similar to those of the literature review) revealed similarities rather than differences in the experiences of trainees, NQTs and schools. There were, however, some areas of feedback specific to HEI-led or school-based training routes.

- **HEI-led routes:** Trainees on HEI-led routes had generally progressed through traditional academic pathways; several trainees on HEI-led routes only became aware of what school-based training entailed when they encountered these trainees during placements. School staff generally enjoyed the collaboration with universities available through these training routes, including being able to engage with current research and knowing that trainees were exposed to up-to-date pedagogy. Likewise, mentors mentioned being invited by HEIs to deliver subject specialist lectures/seminars. School staff therefore regarded these relationships with HEIs as positive collaborations. In terms of evidencing, several HEI providers had agreed that evidencing could predominantly be recorded through notes of meetings with mentors, or as part of observation reports where mentors had looked at work books, feedback and the trainees' impact on teaching and learning (more akin to the reports produced for NQTs). However, skills gaps were particularly reported in terms of a lack of behaviour management among trainees on HEI-led routes.

    Some trainees on HEI-led routes had underestimated the amount of time they would spend in school placements. In relation to the latter, some trainees on the

HEI postgraduate route felt that lecture time and content was therefore not as in-depth as they had expected.

Some NQTs transitioning from HEI-led routes reported that although they had received information from their university prior to the NQT year starting, they did not know what to expect until the first term started. This included a lack of knowledge about the amount of teaching they would be timetabled for, plus the need to complete pastoral and administrative tasks.

- **School-based routes:** Those undertaking school-based training were more likely to have been career changers or had previous work experience in schools. Senior leaders commonly described how these routes offered an opportunity to 'grow your own' recruits and mould them to the ethos of the school. These routes were perceived to immerse trainees in school environments, develop working practices aligned to the needs of a specific setting, and therefore enable them to make rapid progress and have a 'realistic' view of teaching. Thus, negative reactions from parents were reported less by senior leaders participating in school-based ITT routes, particularly where schools regularly hosted trainees or employed NQTs. This was attributed to the clear and regular communications with parents referencing, or involving, trainees and NQTs.

ITT providers delivering school-based routes noted that it was increasingly difficult to secure placements due to the range of providers and the increasing number of school-based arrangements across local areas. However, mentors and senior leaders most commonly said that these routes supported recruitment by helping to attract teachers to schools that they may otherwise not consider due to their location and context.

Several trainees had underestimated the amount of lecture-led content they would cover via school-based routes. In addition, some trainees felt that, in comparison to their peers on HEI-led routes, they were required to maintain and submit a greater amount of evidence. The evidence required for school-based routes often involved paper-based systems, although some school-based ITT providers were moving to online systems.

NQTs who had undertaken school-based training routes more commonly reported that they had felt well prepared for what their role would be like as an NQT, as the majority of their training had been spent in school placements.

7.1 Points for consideration

During the interviews, a number of core themes emerged:

Value of hosting trainees/employing NQTs: Whilst there were challenges for schools in providing the required support to trainees and NQTs, all school staff involved in the

research recognised the benefits of doing so. They felt that new recruits can bring 'fresh ideas' and up-to-date theory and practice, which can engage students and re-invigorate existing staff. The mentor role provided leadership and development opportunities. Access to trainees and NQTs helped school leaders in their succession planning and in ensuring a broad staff profile as well as to manage recruitment and retention issues.

The realisation of such benefits to schools should be more widely promoted to encourage more schools to engage in the process. This could coincide with enhanced information made available to schools and prospective trainees about different training options.

The importance of school-based mentors: Although several trainees and NQTs reported positive relationships with their ITT tutors, they (and all other interviewee types) very commonly emphasised the pivotal role of school-based mentors and NQT tutors. If the relationships between school-based mentors and trainees/NQTs were positive and worked effectively, it was felt to be the most important influence on the overall success of a placement/NQT year. Conversely, where these relationships broke down or the mentor did not have the capacity to offer adequate time and support to trainees/NQTs, interview participants generally perceived this to be a key reason in why training did not meet expectations, or adequate progress was not made.

Increased recognition of this crucial role is important, particularly in a climate where workload remains an important consideration for teachers. Raising the profile of standards for school-based mentors,[26] increased availability of accredited training and national recognition would improve the status of the role, and provide acknowledgement of the commitment, knowledge and skills of mentors working with trainees and NQTs. This could link with commitments made by DfE in relation to fully funded mentor training and funded mentor time as part of the Early Career Framework (ECF),[27] and the development of NPQs as set out in the *Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy* (2019).[28] However, as the Early Career Framework focuses on NQT mentoring, similar consideration should also be given to recognising the important role undertaken by mentors of trainees, including professional mentors.

Therefore, the ability to access additional opportunities for mentor training and support should be considered by training providers and schools. This would be particularly beneficial in challenging areas such as managing difficult conversations, supporting trainees and NQTs with behaviour management, providing constructive feedback and encouraging resilience (reflecting the five core areas of the ECF)[29]. It should be considered how training and/or support can be delivered for mentors in non-conventional

[26] The Teaching Schools Council (July, 2016) *National Standards for school-based initial teacher training (ITT) mentor*
[27] DfE (2019), *Supporting early career teachers*
[28] DfE (2019), *Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy*
[29] These five areas are: behaviour management, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, and professional behaviours.

formats, such as virtual or remote training, in recognition of the need to manage mentor workload and time off-site (see below).

Managing mentor workload: The ability for mentors to offer appropriate levels of resource, time and support for trainees and NQTs was a fundamental consideration at all stages of the process (and for all interviewee types). It was generally felt that mentors spent more time on their roles than the one hour per week stipulated in school timetables (and for several mentors, particularly those overseeing NQTs, this time was not protected on the timetable at all).

Consideration needs to be given to how schools can accommodate mentors more appropriately for the time they are required to give to the role. This could include: additional timetabled/protected time, management of responsibilities and school commitments to align free periods of relevant staff and trainees/NQTs, and the provision of internal cover in order to free up mentor time. In addition, ITT providers and schools could promote examples of good practice in supporting mentors to fulfil their role, explore how the mentor role could work across job-shares and provide peer support networks for mentors to share experiences and learn from others. It would also be worth considering the provision of other forms of mentoring outside of the role of conventional subject/professional mentor that could provide additional layers of support within schools (e.g. virtual mentoring for groups of trainees/NQTs).

Promotion of peer networks and buddy systems which were highly valued by all involved, for mentors as well as trainees and NQTs, would help to encourage more schools to introduce such support systems. Alongside the examples in this report, the literature review also highlights studies that provide examples of practice in sharing learning among teacher trainees (see Appendix 1).

Ensuring capacity: It was important to ITT providers and senior leaders that appropriate capacity and quality was available at school departmental/key stage level, to ensure that trainees and NQTs would be able to model the good practice of existing teachers, observe a range of teaching approaches and styles, and be supported through activities such as shared planning and informal mentoring. There was, therefore, impact on wider colleagues in schools, including host teachers (who were commonly mentors, but not always) and those working in departments with trainees or NQTs as well as potential impact on pupils.

Good practice in the management of this impact whilst ensuring that trainees have varied experiences (to meet all the Teachers' Standards) could be more widely promoted, drawing on examples of how timetabling and staff commitments can be managed to allow trainees to experience teaching of different cohorts (see section 3.6, and for reviewing evidence requirements to manage workload see section 4). It might include examples of where opportunities for trainees and NQTs to observe and teach different lessons and to

work closely with a range of teachers could be achieved through increased collaborative working. Such practice would be underpinned by DfE's commitment to a two-year induction, to enhance the package of training, development and support available to early career teachers from 2021.[30]

Variations in evidencing: The activities undertaken, particularly by trainees, in relation to the collection and recording of evidence were wide-ranging, and dependent upon provider requirements rather than route-specific variations.

Clarity and consistency are required in terms of presenting evidence for assessment. This includes clarity and information on what evidence is expected from ITT providers and appropriate bodies and what can be considered to be evidence, including training providers making expectations and requirements clear at the start of each academic year. Face-to-face meetings can help to clarify these expectations and ensure that all individuals are aware of their own roles and responsibilities.

Standardisation of evidencing across ITT providers would lead to more consistency and reduce the confusion created by the range of routes available and conflicting requirements.

Workload implications of evidence collection: These processes were generally perceived by all to be time-consuming (with the onus shifting in the NQT year onto induction tutors for compiling and submitting reports). The use of electronic systems and software was felt to reduce workload, save time and encourage a more streamlined and continual cycle of review and development involving the ITT provider/appropriate body, senior leader/mentor and trainee/NQT.

All those requiring evidence (ITT providers, appropriate bodies) should be encouraged to review their processes and requirements and gather feedback from schools, trainees, NQTs and mentors to eliminate, as far as possible, the need to duplicate content and to make it clear what 'evidence' looks like (see section 4). ITT providers particularly should make efforts to ensure manageable and sustainable workloads in relation to evidencing and to actively find ways to reduce the burdens on trainees, NQTs and their mentors. However, all those involved in initial teacher education and working with NQTs should aim to reduce the overall workload on those teachers by making expectations realistic and sustainable. This is essential to retain them in their chosen profession and to create a culture where excessive working, especially on unnecessary tasks, is seen as unacceptable.

Managing the amount, and type, of evidence required would be a significant step towards workload reduction in this area. The list of evidence requirements within Ofsted's updated ITT inspection handbook may require additional guidance as to the need to reduce

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[30] DfE (2019), *Supporting early career teachers*

duplication and to ensure evidence observed during inspection is in accordance with the drive to reduce workload.[31] In addition, all training providers should become fully familiar with *Making Data Work* and ensure their practice reflects the principles of the report.[32]

Streamlined processes are required for collating and presenting evidence, to remove any duplication of effort and unnecessary workload. Online and digital systems are increasingly used for this process and should be explored further to see how they can support work to reduce workload. Examples of practice could be shared with schools, providers and appropriate bodies (see section 4.2). This, however, should be balanced with the potential burden created when needing to upload evidence to an online or cloud-based system.

Creating a balance: It was clear from the commentary from existing school staff that – regardless of training pathway – there was a need to find a balance between the development of pedagogical knowledge and theoretical understanding and an appreciation of the practical approaches and strategies required in a classroom on a day-to-day basis. Where it was felt this balance had not been achieved (either through too much theory during HEI-led training, or not enough pedagogical study through school-based training), this generally led to gaps in knowledge and skills being identified. These tended to relate to subject knowledge gaps, a lack of theoretical understanding in relation to pedagogy, lack of experience of the practical requirements of being a teacher (e.g. several NQTs felt unprepared for the range of tasks that teachers were required to undertake each day in addition to their core teaching), and pastoral challenges such as strategies for effective behaviour management.

As identified during the literature review, and reflected in the interview feedback, partnership working between schools and providers needs to be effective in order to provide high quality, secure expertise in the delivery of ITT. To support partnership working, ITT providers need to be fully aware of school timetables, commitments and practicalities, to ensure practical experience and theoretical understanding are up-to-date and aligned. Examples of how providers have worked closely with schools to review the content and focus of training and to align the two elements should be shared more widely.

ITT providers and schools should consider together how trainees can have the 'full experience' to ensure that they are aware of the wider range of activities and responsibilities that they take on as teachers. This will serve to prepare them better for their early teaching career, to help manage workload and work-life balance or stress levels and ultimately improve their experience overall. Being part of a network of schools involved in teacher training can help to ensure that CPD programmes are accessible, and

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[31] Ofsted (2019), *Initial teacher education inspection handbook*
[32] DfE (2018), *Making Data Work: Teacher workload advisory group report*

also that expertise in mentoring and pastoral systems can be shared across placement schools or as part of a collaborative relationship.

Awareness of different ways to train: The range of ITT provision available and the different requirements within each generally led to confusion, or a lack of detailed information being accessed in relation to the different options available. Most senior leaders and trainees said that they would choose routes that they were already familiar with, and selected providers and appropriate bodies with whom they had long-standing relationships. Furthermore, trainees undertaking HEI-led routes appeared to be less aware of school-based routes. They described finding out about what school-based routes entailed through peers when they met these trainees during placements.

Awareness of appropriate bodies: Although a small number of senior leaders reported having close relationships with appropriate bodies, most reported having little contact with them unless an NQT required specific support. Most senior leaders reported that their school's appropriate body was a local authority, suggesting that the offer available via Teaching Schools was not as well known. Few understood that they could review and change their choice of appropriate body. NQTs were generally not aware of the support available to them via appropriate bodies.

Raising awareness of all teacher training options would open up opportunities to potential trainees and reduce the examples of some choosing an inappropriate pathway.

Raising awareness of the support that should be expected whilst training and during the induction year would help trainees and NQTs to reflect on what they are receiving and request further support if required. The role of appropriate bodies in this process is currently unknown to many NQTs.

A review of the appropriate body role more broadly in terms of their statutory duties, the support provided to schools and NQTs and quality assurance of induction would help to improve consistency in their provision.

Perceived awareness of governors – during this study, access to school governors was limited. This was generally due to schools' perceptions that governors would not be able to contribute substantially to the research.

Consideration should be given to the role of governors in reviewing the workload and wellbeing of all teachers (including early career staff), and what strategic oversight they should have of school experiences of hosting trainees and employing NQTs, particularly for school-based training routes (e.g. capacity and resources, quality assurance, service offered by appropriate bodies as part of contract audits).

Appendix 1: Literature review

During July 2018, a thematic literature review was undertaken. Key terms were used to identify sources via general online search engines, as well as major academic databases including Wiley Online and JSTOR, and websites of key relevant organisations, such as government departments, Ofsted and teaching unions.

- Key search terms included for example: 'Challenges/benefits hosting trainee teachers/NQTs/ PGCE'; 'perceptions initial teacher training'; 'experiences schools initial teacher training/NQT'; 'evaluation teacher training/initial teacher training routes'; 'SCITT self-evaluation'; 'Schools Direct impact evaluation'.

- To identify other material related to perceptions of training/NQT experiences, blogs and major publications directed at the education sector such as the *Times Educational Supplement* (TES) and The Guardian's *Teacher Network* and *Schools Week* were also consulted. Excerpts from these are used to illustrate attitudes and perceptions, and are highlighted as such within the review.

- To ensure relevance, literature from the last ten years was included in this review (published 2008 – 2018), although, where pertinent, references to older findings have been made e.g. to provide broader contextual information.

- Seventy sources, including research reports and journal articles, were initially collated for review. Several of these were later discounted, for example where they fell outside of the specified date ranges, where a news article summarised report findings and the original source was reviewed instead, and where reports concerned teacher CPD more broadly rather than ITT specifically.

A summary of the key findings is presented below.

The training routes considered during this project are summarised below.

1. **Undergraduate degree:** Full-time, university-led undergraduate teacher training courses, such as the Batchelor of Education (BEd) degree, which lead to qualified teacher status (QTS). BEd courses typically last three or four years and are a popular route for primary teacher training, although some ITT providers offer secondary BEd programmes for specific subject specialisms. Courses involve academic study on the university campus and a range of school placements. Trainees spend the majority of their time training on-campus. The structure and timing of school placements varies between providers, but typically trainees will have a minimum of one placement in each academic year. Placement lengths also vary (e.g. from one week to ten weeks), but the longest placement typically takes place in the second or third term of the final year of the programme. Trainees must spend a minimum of 120 days in schools on placement. Trainees may also conduct visits to schools prior to their placements.

2. **Postgraduate degree:** University-led teacher training courses for prospective primary and secondary school teachers who already have a bachelor's degree or equivalent. Courses tend to last one or two years and can be studied either full or part-time, leading to a QTS recommendation by the provider. Similar to undergraduate programmes, postgraduate courses combine academic study on the university campus and a minimum of 24 weeks on placement in two or more schools. Some training providers offer the ability to earn the credits required for a full master's in education after PGCE training has been completed.

3. **School Centred Teacher Training (SCITT):** SCITT is delivered by networks of primary and secondary schools and training providers that have been accredited by the DfE to provide ITT and make QTS recommendations. Trainee teachers are based in one or more schools in the network for the majority of their training and are recommended for QTS by the accredited training provider. Many SCITT providers also work closely with HEIs and offer the opportunity for trainees to gain a PGCE qualification alongside QTS. Centre-based academic training is typically conducted each week throughout the programme at the lead school or partner HEI. Placements typically involve a main school placement in the autumn and summer terms, with a shorter contrasting school placement in the spring term. The number of days per week spent in centre-based training tends to decrease and the amount of time spent teaching in school tends to increase as the course progresses.

4. **School Direct unsalaried:** Introduced in 2012, School Direct unsalaried courses are one-year full time teacher training courses designed by groups of primary or secondary schools in partnership with a HEI college or SCITT provider, leading to QTS. The programme is available to graduates with less than three years' work experience and trainees pay tuition fees for the course. School Direct unsalaried trainees must be supernumerary. Trainee teachers spend the majority of their training time in one school, with a shorter placement in a second school, typically in the spring term. Some programmes offer additional short placements in specific settings, such as special schools. School placements are combined with a schedule of centre-based training at the partner HEI college or SCITT, which tends to decrease as the course progresses. The amount of time spent teaching typically increases throughout the programme, so that by the end of the course trainees are typically teaching an 80% timetable. Many School Direct unsalaried programmes include a PCGE qualification.

5. **School Direct salaried:** The School Direct salaried route replaced the Graduate Training Programme (GTP) in September 2013. School Direct salaried is an employment-based route for primary or secondary teacher training. Trainees with three or more years' work experience are provided with a fully funded teacher training year leading to QTS recommendation and a salary whilst training. Training is run by individual schools or a group of schools who work closely with a

university or SCITT provider. Some programmes also offer a PGCE qualification, which may not be funded. Trainees spend the majority of their time in school, typically with an 80% teaching timetable from the start. Centre-based training is also provided involving a mix of day release and block training sessions, although the timing and structure of this varies between providers. Trainees also undertake a short placement in a contrasting school at some point during their training, typically in the spring term.

6. **Teach First:** Teach First was founded in 2002 with the aim of attracting high achieving graduates with leadership potential into the teaching profession, and to support them to enter schools in areas of economic disadvantage. Participants commit to two years salaried teaching in a primary or secondary school in a low-income community, which covers both their trainee teacher and NQT year. Employment is combined with fully-funded centre-based academic training provided in partnership with universities leading to a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) with optional masters. Training commences with an intensive Summer Institute training course, typically taking place in June and July. Teach First trainee teachers are expected to take on a high level of responsibility and typically begin with a 60% teaching timetable from the start of the academic year, increasing to 80% once trainees are more established. A short one week second placement in a contrasting setting is provided. Primary trainees also undertake 20 days in an alternative key stage placement (typically in the same school), whereas secondary trainees undertake a one-day placement in a primary school.

Funding

Eligible undergraduate and postgraduate trainees on non-salaried routes can apply for funding under the standard undergraduate student support system. A range of bursaries and scholarships are also available for some trainees, depending on the subject they are training in and, for postgraduates, the class of their bachelor's degree. There have also been specific programmes to support teacher recruitment and retention in specialist subject areas.[33]

Newly Qualified Teachers

In 2017, there were just over 25,000 Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) employed in primary and secondary schools across England.[34] The NQT status provides an induction period whilst transitioning into a teaching post. Statutory induction is the bridge between initial teacher training and a career in teaching. It is designed to combine a personalised

[33] See for example, Education and Training Foundation, *Support for Teacher Recruitment*
[34] DfE (2017), *School workforce in England: November 2017*

programme of development, support and professional dialogue with monitoring and an assessment of performance against the relevant standards. The programme should support the NQT to demonstrate that their performance against the relevant standards is satisfactory by the end of the period and equip them with the tools to be an effective and successful teacher.

The Teachers' Standards are used to assess an NQT's performance at the end of their induction period. Assessments reflect the expectation that NQTs have effectively consolidated their training and demonstrated their ability to meet the relevant standards consistently over a sustained period in their practice. An NQT generally cannot be employed unless they have passed their induction[35] and they cannot start their induction until their appropriate body has been agreed. The appropriate body oversees the induction process providing independent quality assurance of statutory induction to ensure that schools provide adequate support for their NQTs, and that their assessment is fair and consistent across all institutions.

Pre-2008: Research summary

Although there has been much research undertaken regarding teacher training and the career development of early career teachers, this has tended to focus on the experiences and perceptions of trainees and NQTs,[36] or the shifting role of HEIs in ITT delivery.[37] Historically, however, there has been little focus on the experiences and perceptions of the existing school workforce when trainees or NQTs are placed within their school.

A literature review conducted by the Centre for Research and Development in Teacher Education at The Open University (Hurd 2007) reviewed all literature between 1980 and 2007 that referenced impact on schools of teacher training. Its key findings were that:[38]

- Schools benefited from ITT by additional resources coming into the school through funding to support trainees.

- Schools appreciated having more personnel in classrooms, thereby increasing capacity.

- The sharing of new knowledge and skills from trainees to existing staff had a positive impact on workforce continuous professional development (CPD).

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[35] This is not applicable to some academies, or schools in the independent sector.
[36] For example, recently: NCTL (2016), *The customer journey to initial teacher training: Research report;* NCTL (2016), *Newly Qualified Teachers: Annual Survey*
[37] See for example: Universities UK (2014), *The Impact of Initial Teacher Training Reforms on English Higher Education Institutions,* and Brown T., Rowley, H. and Smith, K. (2016), *The beginnings of school-led teacher training: New challenges for university teacher education. School Direct Research Project Final Report*
[38] Hurd, S (2007), *The Impact of Trainee Teachers on School Achievement: A review of research*

- There was a perceived increase in existing teachers' workload, particularly when trainees were learning how to overcome challenges they faced during their training.

School-based ITT was also perceived by schools quoted in the literature to have a potential negative impact on learner and inspection outcomes. However, Hurd (2007) found that mentors, particularly in primary settings, felt that 'the presence of trainees improved the climate of learning in the classroom', with training-active schools achieving higher outcomes at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 compared with those not engaged with school-based ITT; the gains in Key Stage 3 outcomes increased in secondary schools hosting seven or more trainees per placement.[39]

The review identified 'opportunities for host teachers to reflect upon and improve their own practice, a platform for professional learning especially through links with HEIs, and benefits in terms of teacher retention and recruitment'.[40] In conclusion, it suggested that other areas of research in terms of school impact should focus on the management of 'weaker trainees', mentor selection, and evidence on the impact on schools (e.g. outcomes) correlated with data on the allocation of trainees to classes and total teaching hours given to trainees.[41]

2008 – 2018: Research summary

Research undertaken in the ten years since Hurd's review has not made significant progress in filling the gaps in understanding around the experiences and perceptions of schools when hosting trainees or employing NQTs, nor regarding the perceived impacts on schools of these experiences. Most research has focused on evaluating the range of training routes available, and the perceptions or experiences of trainees themselves.

The Carter Review of ITT identified 'elements of high-quality ITT across phases and subject disciplines' that are key to 'equipping trainees with the required skills and knowledge to become outstanding teachers'.[42] Simultaneously, one of the most significant pieces of research exploring schools' experiences, was NCTL's 2015 *Teaching Schools Evaluation*.[43] This identified a range of broad perceived impacts on schools participating in the Teaching Schools Alliance (TSA) programme. There were some findings specific to ITT, in particular:[44]

- Involvement in ITT delivery and mentoring trainees on a consistent basis had prompted the existing school workforce to reflect more on their own teaching practice and place an increased focus on pupil progress as a result.

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[39] Ibid., p.1
[40] Ibid., p.2
[41] Ibid.
[42] Carter, A. (2015), *Carter review of initial teacher training (ITT),* p.3
[43] NCTL (2015), *Teaching Schools Evaluation: Final Report*
[44] Ibid., p.13

- Being tasked with leading training delivery, CPD programmes or school-to-school support, and engaging with specific support provision, such as that provided by Specialist Leaders in Education (SLEs) as a result of school-led ITT provision, had created opportunities for leadership development, particularly among middle leadership.

- Schools participating in the TSA programme reported an improvement in the recruitment and retention rates of high-quality trainees.

Broader benefits of being a teaching school, including improvements in pupil outcomes and progress, were attributed to the sense that most schools delivering ITT/CPD programmes invested additional resources into the workforce, and thus expanded their teaching and learning capacity and breadth of expertise as a result. For example, it was felt that the delivery of TSA programmes required a 'collective commitment from the staff' to become a centre of good practice, thus increasing quality and accountability. In turn, this was perceived to enable the school to offer high quality and attractive CPD opportunities, which improved 'collective capacity' and expertise – leading ultimately to improvements in teaching and learning approaches that impacted directly on pupil achievement.[45]

Schools reported that effective coordination of ITT delivery was dependent upon successful partnership working with HEIs and other schools within a TSA network. However, the NCTL report indicated that this partnership working may need to be improved in some networks. It was recommended that the various partners involved in ITT delivery needed to better understand the different practices and perspectives of each (e.g. the perspectives of HEIs compared to the needs of schools), so as to 'maximise the strengths' that each could bring to the partnership.[46]

School involvement in teacher training

Collating common themes around the experiences of hosting trainees has been difficult due to the gaps in existing literature, and the lack of independent research into the different routes, where any form of evaluation has taken place. Most studies over the last ten years have explored the perceptions of different training routes or comparative studies of the different routes, rather than specific experiences of schools in hosting trainees or employing NQTs. The following sections bring together key points where they are available in the published literature.

[45] Ibid., p.149
[46] NCTL (2015), *Teaching Schools Evaluation: Final Report,* p.157

Partnerships and collaboration

Although funding has been reported by schools to be 'insufficient to cover the scope of the work required' for the delivery of ITT, they have also reported that sharing practice and partnership working with other local networks – particularly those using the School Direct model – could help to improve efficiency by offering economies of scale.[47]

Effective partnership working (both between schools and training providers, and between schools within training partnerships/networks) was a key issue identified through the NCTL evaluation of the TSA programme. Where partnerships worked well they were perceived to provide high quality, secure expertise in the delivery of ITT. Indeed, the delivery of ITT was found to be a main motivation for TSAs maintaining their alliances.[48]

The same evaluation also found that relationships with HEIs could be challenging due to the perceived conflicts in vision between schools' wishes to meet immediate recruitment challenges versus HEIs' ideological positions of improving longer-term career prospects of students.

> 'In all the case study alliances, there was…clear preference for school-led ITT provision, which was allied with a greater sense of ownership and confidence in schools in terms of recruiting and producing high quality teachers for the profession. Whilst teaching schools tended to emphasise their focus on quality over quantity in the ITT provision, their university partners tended to stress the importance of focussing on developing individual trainees' potential for a career in the wider teaching profession… For schools, the criteria appeared to be firmly driven by a decision as to whether they would offer this person a job in their own schools immediately after the initial training year'.[49]

Conflict in expertise between HEIs and school-led deliverers

HEIs have recognised some benefits to have emerged from school-led ITT, including reducing the administrative burden on universities of finding and securing school placements, and improving levels of students' preparation and experience directly in schools.[50]

A review of the impact of School Direct (Brown et al, 2016) examined the changing role of HEIs in the shift towards school-based ITT. This involved over 120 interviews with a range of trainees, teacher-trainers and mentors, although a detailed breakdown of the

[47] Ibid., p.113
[48] Ibid., p.110
[49] NCTL (2015), *Teaching Schools Evaluation: Final Report,* p.144
[50] Brown T., Rowley, H. and Smith, K. (2016), *The beginnings of school-led teacher training: New challenges for university teacher education. School Direct Research Project Final Report*, p.20

sample involved in the interviews is not provided within the report. Its findings should also be treated with some caution, since the review was not independent.

There was some suggestion within the study (from HEIs) that schools may not always be in the best position to identify strong candidates for teacher training, as school staff were thought not to have experience of what beginning students look like compared to those that have completed training and are at NQT level; this was reported to have created disagreements between HEIs and schools in terms of the candidates to be accepted onto a School Direct course and the assessment criteria for this process.[51]

In addition, it was suggested by HEIs that, compared to tutors based in HEIs, school-based trainers may not have the time or resource to carry out research or develop theoretical understanding of pedagogical models and concepts that could be applied to each subject area to be covered through ITT.[52] Nonetheless, the study also identified that 'there was a growing interest amongst school-based educators in how research can be used to inform practice and how they could work more closely with universities for CPD purposes' – suggesting a wider potential impact on schools of hosting trainees in terms of workforce development, particularly around subject and pedagogical knowledge.[53]

Given these conflicts in perspectives, the review noted that in the long-term, to create a more 'balanced partnership' between schools and HEIs in the delivery of high-quality ITT, careful relationship management and agreed delegation of roles and responsibilities was required between partners.[54]

NCTL's evaluation of the TSA programme identified that School Direct was perceived by schools to offer 'more ownership of placements', in terms of enabling schools to review candidate applications and involvement in the interview and selection process for placements. This was supported by commentary from TSAs that schools preferred the 'practitioner-led' or 'bespoke' training that the route offered to their settings.[55] However, there were concerns that this approach would not meet the needs of small schools in rural areas due to the requirement to take up post-training employment, which was perceived not to be as attractive to potential recruits in isolated rural communities.[56]

[51] Ibid., p.19
[52] Brown T., Rowley, H. and Smith, K. (2016), *The beginnings of school-led teacher training: New challenges for university teacher education. School Direct Research Project Final Report*, p.19
[53] Brown T., Rowley, H. and Smith, K. (2016), *The beginnings of school-led teacher training: New challenges for university teacher education. School Direct Research Project Final Report*, p.25
[54] Ibid., p.20
[55] NCTL (2015), *Teaching Schools Evaluation: Final Report*, p.110
[56] Ibid., p.113

Duration of training and time for mentoring

During a five-year longitudinal study by Sheffield Hallam University (2011), feedback was offered by school senior leadership teams (SLTs) specifically that the one-year PGCE framework created challenges for schools in 'adequately preparing NQTs' compared to training routes that offered 'more classroom experience'.[57] They felt that this meant that schools spent more time helping trainees (and subsequently, NQTs) to manage their workloads.[58]

In terms of hosting PGCE students, some benefits to the existing workforce have been reported anecdotally. The perceived benefits, listed for example in a teacher blog, have included time being provided within each weekly timetable to offer mentoring and coaching to a PGCE student, additional funding for the school to purchase resources, positive enthusiasm of trainees bringing fresh insight and new ideas to share with existing teachers, and additional workload support as a result of trainees taking on some tasks in school.[59] However, the time taken to mentor PGCE students was perceived to be greater than the timetabled allowance for this work (one period each week).[60]

Cost effectiveness, challenges and benefits

In 2014, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) carried out a study of the evidence of the cost effectiveness of the different routes into teaching.[61] The findings of this study were limited to short-term costs and benefits of training. For schools specifically, the greatest staff cost covered tasks such as mentoring, carrying out peer observations and giving feedback to trainees; generally, there were no major differences identified between the various routes in terms of the total staff time cost. Other costs to schools as a result of ITT were related to recruitment of trainees, payments to providers and salary/payroll implications.[62] Overall, the study indicated that:

> 'School-based routes are typically thought to have a higher net benefit to the host school than university-based routes. The majority of respondents felt that the net benefits for HEI-led PGCE and BEd trainees were equal to one another. School Direct salaried was reported to have lower net benefits than Teach First'.[63]

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[57] Sheffield Hallam University (2008), *Report on Part 2 Phase 1 – NQT Quality Improvement Study: The NQT Year*, p.5
[58] Ibid., p.6
[59] The Guardian, ['Secret Teacher: I am too overworked to give trainees the support they need'](#); 11 July 2015,
[60] Ibid.
[61] Institute for Fiscal Studies (2014), *The costs and benefits of different initial teacher training routes*
[62] Ibid., p.3
[63] Ibid.

Notably, the study highlighted that future research on the impact of the different ITT routes needed to consider the contribution made by the programmes 'to the supply and quality of trainees'.[64] Furthermore, and following the IFS report, the National Audit Office flagged in 2016 that there was insufficient information about 'long-term costs and the extent to which each route, and increasing schools' role in [ITT] has improved teaching standards'.[65]

Challenges

As part of its cost-benefit analysis, IFS carried out surveys of school leaders and ITT coordinators to identify the perceived benefits and challenges for schools associated with ITT. For both primary and secondary respondents, the most commonly perceived barrier to participating in ITT was a lack of staff capacity to support trainees (Table 9). This reflects the points reported by the NCTL evaluation of TSAs and more anecdotal commentary (as noted above) that a main challenge to schools in hosting trainees is the time and resource required to provide high quality mentoring.

Table 9: Perceived barriers to participating in ITT training (Source: IFS, 2014)[66]

Perceived barrier	Primary (Base = 96)	Secondary (Base = 206)
Lack of staff capacity to support trainees	66%	50%
Concerns about potential negative impact on pupil progress	47%	34%
Previous poor experiences of supporting trainees	21%	12%
Budgetary constraints	20%	12%
Previous poor experience of working with ITT providers	20%	6%
Lack of suitable candidates	11%	24%
No opportunity to host trainees	4%	14%

[64] Ibid.
[65] National Audit Office (2016), *Training new teachers*, p.12
[66] Institute of Fiscal Studies (2014), *The Costs and Benefits of Different Initial Teacher Training Routes*, p.23

Another perceived barrier was schools' concerns regarding the potential negative impact of hosting trainees on pupil progress. At around the same time as the IFS report, one small study was undertaken to explore the evidence for this concern from a quantitative perspective. The Faculty of Education at Canterbury Christ Church University reviewed data for twenty-five partner primary schools that had hosted the largest number of its teaching students between 2012 and 2014.[67] It compared these against progress data produced by Ofsted for the twenty-five schools, and average progress and performance across schools nationally. The study concluded that the schools taking on trainees performed positively (compared to the national average) in terms of progress across reading, writing and mathematics – they had also made good progress against closing the attainment gap for disadvantaged cohorts; this did not change according to Ofsted rating.[68] Further national research would need to be undertaken to scrutinise these findings in detail and identify whether it could be replicated across all schools hosting trainees and NQTs.

Benefits

Respondents to the IFS study were also asked to identify the perceived benefits that trainees brought to schools (Table 10) – however the report does not identify the respondent base for this question, so it is not possible to assess how robust these data are.

Table 10: Perceived benefits of the school hosting trainees across different training routes (Source: IFS, 2014)[69]

	BEd		Teach First		HEI-led PGCE		School Direct (salaried)		School Direct (unsalaried)		SCITT	
Primary (P) or Secondary (S)	P (%)	S (%)	P (%)	S (%)	P (%)	S (%)	P (%)	S (%)	P (%)	S (%)	P (%)	S (%)
Fresh teaching ideas	74	69	63	77	70	56	78	70	80	69
CPD opportunities	64	51	62	59	66	59	74	65	76	66
Extra capacity	62	43	48	43	71	56	74	47	60	49
Expectation to hire	18	59	23	28	71	52	63	35	62	34
Financial benefit	31	35	23	30	32	18	44	26	27	26
Other*	56	63	61	62	90	62	69	68	62	65

* No further details were provided in the report as to what 'other' constituted.

[67] Birrell, G. and Bowie,B. (2014), 'What happens to schools who host lots of student teachers', 18 November 2014, *considered*

[68] Birrell, G. and Bowie,B. (2014), 'What happens to schools who host lots of student teachers', 18 November 2014, *considered*:

[69] Institute of Fiscal Studies (2014), *The Costs and Benefits of Different Initial Teacher Training Routes,* p.38-40

Nonetheless, there was quite a notable difference between the proportion of respondents to the IFS survey reporting the expectation to hire new teachers via school-led training routes, compared to those from the HEI-led PGCE route. Thus, one of the perceived benefits of school-led ITT is the opportunity by schools to identify potential candidates for recruitment, as the IFS report notes.[70] This was supported by the findings of the NCTL evaluation the following year, which established that schools involved in delivering school-led ITT routes were likely to be viewing the provision as an opportunity to meet immediate and short-term recruitment needs.[71]

Other limited examples of the benefits and/or good practice in hosting trainee teachers have been highlighted by DfE and Ofsted.[72] These include:

- **Collaborative working:** delivering training through a collaborative partnership enables schools from varying contexts to support one another and deliver rich training from different perspectives to students; coherent planning and strategic monitoring means that aspects of training can be evaluated by all stakeholders, e.g. through partnership committees tasked with scrutinising course development, quality assurance and improvement planning.

- **Capacity building:** for MATs and other schools, becoming a SCITT provider had specifically helped to provide opportunities to build teaching capacity across a trust or collaboration (e.g. within a teaching alliance). This was reported to be particularly important for subject areas experiencing shortages in teacher supply (e.g. mathematics).

- **Continuing professional development:** Being part of a network of schools during teacher training can help to ensure that CPD programmes are accessible and shared across placement schools, meaning that there can be access to mentors, pastoral systems and workshops delivered across a network. These partnerships can also have a positive impact on CPD for existing staff, with teaching leads being able to deliver bespoke CPD to schools within a partnership.

The NCTL evaluation of teaching schools highlighted that offering flexible and wide-ranging placement opportunities across a range of school contexts and phases had a number of benefits for trainees including exposure to different classroom settings and lesson observations and the ability to build personal relationships across a range of schools.[73] However, the report cautioned that it was important not to lose the academic

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[70] Institute of Fiscal Studies (2014), *The Costs and Benefits of Different Initial Teacher Training Routes,* p.38
[71] NCTL (2015), *Teaching Schools Evaluation: Final Report*
[72] These include: Ofsted (2015), *Continuous improvement in secondary school-based initial teacher training partnership: Durham SCITT;* Ofsted (2015), *Working in partnership to improve access and achievement*; Gilhooly, G. (2107), 'School improvement starts with high quality teacher training', *DfE Teaching blog,* 19 July 2017
[73] NCTL (2015), *Teaching Schools Evaluation: Final Report,* p.114

rigour perceived to be in place through the PGCE framework due to a potential 'lack of engagement in challenging reflective practice' that may occur as a result of school-based models of delivery.[74]

Hosting NQTs: school experiences

A longitudinal study carried out between 2007 and 2011 on behalf of the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) explored the factors impacting on the recruitment and retention of NQTs, the needs of schools in relation to high quality NQTs and how the performance and progression of NQTs is measured over time.[75] Involving the senior leaders and NQTs in schools across 65 local authorities, the study comprised a multi-method approach of online surveying, interviews and case study visits. It found that:

- In terms of recruitment there was often a 'mismatch between where senior leaders advertised – mainly teaching press and LA bulletins - and where NQTs looked – mainly electronic sources'.[76]

- Senior leaders felt that skills such as behaviour management and classroom management were areas where schools needed to provide more support to NQTs after they were recruited (particularly those in secondary schools).[77]

- Most schools follow standard induction and performance management processes, involving assessment points through the year , plus observations and regular (e.g. half-termly) review meetings to assess progress towards targets.[78]

[74] NCTL (2015), *Teaching Schools Evaluation: Final Report,* Ibid., p.114
[75] Sheffield Hallam University (2011), *Synthesised key findings from all five stages of the NQT Quality Improvement Study*
[76] Ibid., p.51
[77] Ibid, p.6
[78] Ibid., p.10

NQT induction

A longitudinal study on behalf of the TDA (2011) found that the types of support made available to NQTs (as reported by senior leaders) were in line with these regulations, including:[79]

- 10% release from timetable (reported by 98% of 721 senior leaders).

- Provision of an induction tutor (reported by 96% of 715 senior leaders).

- Opportunities to observe other teachers (94% of 720 senior leaders).

The study found that in most schools one individual oversaw induction of NQTs.[80]

Perceptions of NQTs among induction tutors have been captured in earlier literature, including their ability to bring enthusiasm and new ideas to the existing school workforce.

> 'Induction tutors…referred to NQTs as assets to the school, bringing with them new ideas and fresh perspectives, which could have the effect of energising more experienced teaching staff…interviewees explicitly stated that NQTs had a lot to offer the school, with some of these also emphasising that NQTs 'brought' new strategies and up to date information concerning the profession…with [others] valuing the life experiences NQTs bring'.[81]

NQT induction tutors also felt that they benefited from the experience in terms of their own professional development:

> 'Induction tutors provided a wide range of reasons for enjoying their role. Being an induction tutor was seen as an opportunity to support and develop new members of staff, raise standards within schools, make friends, and … access new ideas and bring new life into departments. Many induction tutors saw the role as beneficial to themselves as well as to the NQTs, referring, for example, to opportunities it provided for them to become 're-energised' or 're-engaged' with the profession, as well as to opportunities for their own professional development through, for instance, the necessity to be reflective'.[82]

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[79] Sheffield Hallam University (2011), *Synthesised key findings from all five stages of the NQT Quality Improvement Study,* p.18
[80] Ibid., p.23
[81] Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007), *Newly Qualified Teachers' Experiences of their First Year of Teaching: Findings from Phase III of the Becoming a Teacher Project,* p.117
[82] Ibid., p.121

There were four main challenges that induction tutors identified in carrying out their role. These were: [83]

1. Lack of time.

2. Inappropriate timetabling (e.g. mismatches between their own and the NQTs' timetables).

3. Paperwork/administration demands (e.g. level of paperwork required being a constraint).

4. Lack of wider support from colleagues.

Where SLTs showed interest in the mentoring process, this was perceived to offer 'recognition of the value' of the role, whilst mentors also appreciated it when colleagues offered to provide ideas or share resources with NQTs.[84] In return, senior leaders have suggested that induction programmes needed to be better tailored to individual needs, particularly where the schools had drawn upon induction programmes delivered by the local authority, with a reduction in the amount of paperwork required by the school and improved logistical arrangements (e.g. sessions not taking place during school time, with a greater range of dates, and flexibility for NQTs to access specific and relevant aspects of externally-delivered induction, rather than being required to pay for a whole programme).[85]

Furthermore, TSAs have specifically reported school capacity as a challenge:

> 'In terms of coordination, finding placements, contacting schools and arranging the placements, and interviewing prospective students. Also, the market poses challenges of efficiency. Some candidates had made multiple applications but did not attend their interview. This leads to a wastage of time for senior leaders of TSAs. Some alliances have appointed additional staff to coordinate the work and help to reduce the workload of senior teachers and leaders, but this has considerable cost implications'.[86]

Trainee/NQT experiences

In terms of experiences of ITT trainees/early career teachers, research prior to 2008 also highlighted the importance of induction processes in relation to NQTs in England.[87] There were also detailed examinations of the experiences of NQTs in a wide range of areas

[83] Ibid., p.122
[84] Ibid.
[85] Sheffield Hallam University (2011), *Synthesised key findings from all five stages of the NQT Quality Improvement Study,* p.19
[86] NCTL (2015), *Teaching Schools Evaluation: Final Report,* p.111
[87] Bubb, S., (2007), 'The Impact of Induction on Newly Qualified Teachers in England', paper presentation at British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, 5 September 2007.

including teaching, induction, CPD, support and future places.[88] Since then, a five-year longitudinal study from NASUWT has focused on how ITT and early career support helps NQTs prepare for their teaching careers.[89] This found that developing the appropriate skills in behaviour management is a significant issue for NQTs and early career teachers, and is often a determining factor in decisions to leave the career within five years of qualifying.[90]

> 'Almost half of the NQTs surveyed were dissatisfied with the training they had received on behaviour management and dealing with indiscipline once they had been in post for two terms, suggesting that training in this area needs improvement. More than half felt unprepared to deal with physical violence in the classroom and more than a third with verbal aggression'.[91]

Challenges for NQTs have been perceived to be:[92]

- Learning how to build positive relationships with pupils and maintaining authority in a classroom (including managing challenging behaviours).
- Challenging expectations from SLTs.
- High levels of workload.

A very small study by the University of Hertfordshire followed the progress of two trainee teachers on School Direct (salaried) and participated in Lesson Study (teacher-led investigations into pedagogy, curriculum and learning). This study found that the experience of observing pupil learning and sharing their findings with other teachers led to a development in their understanding of teaching and learning.[93] This was supported by a larger study gathering evidence of impact of Lesson Study across four separate studies, which has led to the approach being adopted in a range of schools and teaching alliances following its incorporation in both SCITT and PGCE training programmes.[94] Although these studies have highlighted positive impacts on the practice and perceptions of trainee teachers/NQTs, no feedback was gathered from the perspective of the schools and mentors involved.

A comparatively larger scale project, in terms of the number of teachers involved, was carried out into the impact of induction experiences on NQTs, although this again

[88] For example, Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007), *Newly Qualified Teachers' Experiences of their First Year of Teaching: Findings from Phase III of the Becoming a Teacher Project*
[89] NASUWT (2009), *Sink or Swim? Learning Lessons from Newly Qualified and Recently Qualified Teachers*
[90] Ibid., p.61
[91] Ibid.
[92] Stanley, J., 'Handling the challenges of being an NQT', 25 September 2014, *SecEd*
[93] Mackintosh, J. 'The impact of Lesson Study on the development of two primary student-teachers', University of Hertfordshire *Link* vol. 2 issue 1, 2016:
[94] University of Leicester, 'Impact of Lesson Study Research'

focused on a small cohort (schools within one London-based local authority).[95] This found that ten areas of induction 'make a difference to the impact that induction has on the effectiveness and resilience of new teachers'.[96] These were to ensure:

- Thorough and rigorous recruitment process.

- Pre-induction visits, getting to know staff, pupils and processes.

- Induction tutors/mentors have time and CPD to carry out their role effectively and the skills and knowledge to provide guidance and support.

- Peer support/pastoral care to ensure the wellbeing of NQTs is supported through challenging/demanding first year in teaching.

- Contact and support from the school in the week leading up to the first term of the year.

- Career development profiles are used as a tool within the school for CPD, performance management, objective planning and assessment.

- Clear identification of CPD requirements and setting objectives/targets for development.

- Opportunities to observe practice, shadow colleagues and gain ideas from practical courses/sharing practice (including having their own practice observed).

- Regular reviews of NQT progress (half-termly) to ensure all are aware of progress and to address areas for development quickly.

Gaps in evidence

Over the last ten years, there has been a limited amount of comparative analysis around the impact of different ITT routes and NQT experiences. Much of this is reported from the perspective of teacher trainees or providers, rather than exploring the impact on, or implications for, schools specifically. Consequently, there is little empirical evidence relating to the experiences and perceptions of schools of hosting trainee teachers and NQTs. What is available is limited in focus and tends to be qualitative in nature, rather than reviewing quantitative data (often the main concern of schools in terms of progress and outcomes).

Where studies of ITT routes have been undertaken, they tend to be small scale involving trainees and/or tutors from less than five providers, or carried out by providers internally

[95] Bubb, S (2007). 'The Impact of Induction on Newly Qualified Teachers in England'. Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Institute of Education, University of London, 5-8 September 2007.
[96] Ibid., p.6

with their own placement schools. Based on the existing literature, it has not been possible to identify whether one route is more effective than others; strengths and challenges have been reported in relation to each, although there is some indication that 'the move towards school-led ITT' has had a positive effect.[97]

Larger, longitudinal studies were not commonly identified. Where they do exist, these tend to focus on the recruitment and support functions for developing NQTs, and NQT perceptions of their effectiveness, rather than the experiences and perceptions of these processes among existing school staff. The experiences of all parties involved in each training route are also not compared within these studies. As a result, the majority of recommendations coming from these studies suggest areas in which schools/senior leaders could change or improve the experience for NQTs, rather than areas where schools themselves may require additional support.

[97] Carter, A. (2015), *Carter review of initial teacher training (ITT),* p.6

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Appendix 3: Detailed methodology

To ensure the findings could be triangulated across ITT providers, schools, trainees and NQTs, recruitment of schools was conducted via ITT providers. The aim was to conduct linked interviews to gain perspectives from trainees/NQTs, the schools they had been placed in or were completing their induction year in, and their ITT providers.

A list of ITT providers in England who offered the HEI undergraduate degree, HEI postgraduate, SCITT or School Direct ITT routes was supplied by DfE, detailing the training routes offered by each provider. The majority of providers offered multiple ITT routes, therefore, the list was divided across the four ITT routes according to the following process:

- The total number of providers offering each route and combinations of routes were calculated.

- All but one of the HEI ITT providers offered the postgraduate route and two-thirds offered the undergraduate route. Half of the HEI providers that offered the undergraduate route were selected at random and allocated to the HEI undergraduate sample.

- The remaining HEI providers were allocated to the HEI postgraduate sample.

- For SCITT and School Direct routes, single route providers were separated and allocated to the relevant sample. The remainder were randomly allocated to the SCITT or School Direct route, ensuring the sample remained proportionally representative of those offering multiple routes.

Using the collated sample contacts, an introductory email was sent to a random selection of providers across the north, midlands and south of England. The email briefly outlined the purpose, aims and approach of the research.

For the Teach First ITT route, initial contact was made via their head office and then via regional offices.

Initial emails were followed-up with telephone calls and further emails to establish the most appropriate person to speak to, clarify the purpose of the research and to gain agreement in principle from providers. A project briefing document was sent to providers, which explained the research approach and how the providers, trainees/NQTs and associated schools would be involved.

Agreement to participate was sought from three providers per ITT route for the HEI undergraduate, HEI postgraduate, SCITT or School Direct routes. For Teach First, participation was sought from the regional offices.

ITT providers and Teach First regional offices were then asked to recruit five schools to participate in the research; four schools to take part in telephone interviews and one school to take part in a case study visit.

The overall target sample structure is outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Target sample structure[98]
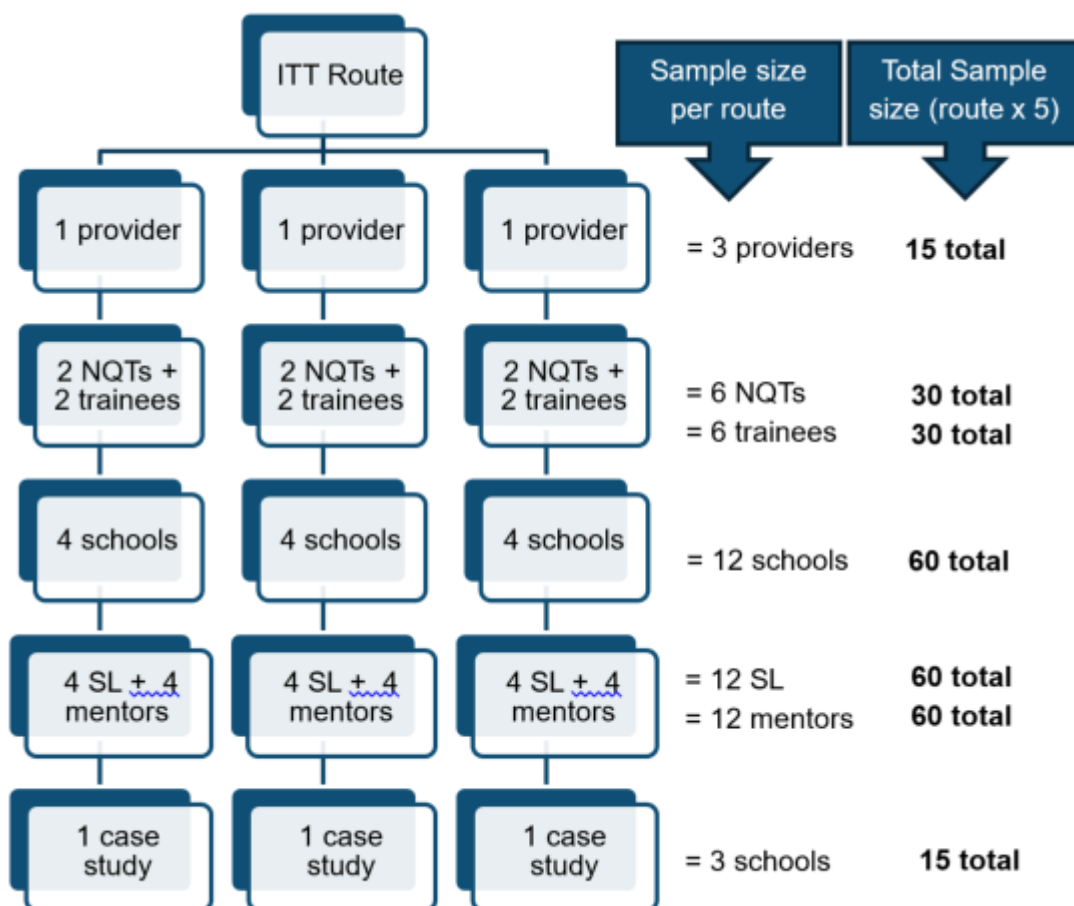
Providers were asked wherever possible to ensure that a broad range of schools, trainees and NQTs were contacted based on the following criteria:

- Phase of education (primary, secondary).

- School type (single academies, multi-academy trusts (MATs) Local Authority (LA) maintained schools and Teaching School Alliances (TSAs)).

- Ofsted rating.

[98] In Figure 1, 'SL' represents 'senior leader'.

- Size of school relative to the phase of education.

- Subject specialism for secondary trainees/NQTs.

- Gender of trainee/NQT.

- Current trainees (academic year 2018/19) and those who trained in 2017/18.

- Current NQTs (academic year 2018/19) and those who completed their NQT induction in 2017/18.

- Context, such as urban versus rural locations and above versus below the average proportion of pupils receiving free school meals (FSM).

ITT providers made initial contact with schools to explain the research and gain their agreement to participate. A school briefing document and email outline were made available for providers to send to schools. Once schools agreed to participate, further emails and telephone calls were made as necessary to gain agreement to participate and establish convenient times for interviews.

In addition to the provider and school interviews, eight interviews were conducted with wider stakeholders including appropriate bodies, local authorities (LAs), multi-academy trusts (MATs) and teaching school alliances (TSAs). A list of organisations was identified through a combination of selecting establishments at random from the register of schools and colleges in England, Get Information About Schools (GIAS), and general internet searches for contact details. An introductory email was sent by CGR to a range of appropriate bodies, MATs, TSAs and LAs which briefly outlined the purpose, aims and approach for the research. Further emails and telephone calls were made as necessary to gain agreement to participate and establish convenient times for interviews.

The semi-structured interviews were designed to take 30-60 minutes. Different discussion topic guides were developed for the different stakeholders to ensure that only relevant questions were asked.

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

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