

# PGCE PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER



## Welcome to the final newsletter of the year!

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

The 2023-24 cohort has already left us after their year's training course, but what a year it has been for the University of York ITE partnership and its beginning teachers. We haven't been interrupted by a pandemic or strikes at the university or in our partner schools this year, but in January 2024, after a wait of 11 years, we did finally say hello to a team of Ofsted HMIs who came to inspect our initial teacher education provision.

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Thanks must go out to all of our partnership (our beginning teachers, our mentors, our professional tutors and our university staff). We were recognised for quite a few aspects of our provision, so here are a few highlights to remind ourselves at the end of year exactly what we are doing well as an ITE Partnership.

The Ofsted report for the University's initial teacher training (ITT) provision stated that:

- York trainees “are given the training and support that they need to succeed.”
- Local headteachers were “impressed by the resilience and professionalism of trainees and their readiness to become confident practitioners”, and that early career teachers who trained at the University are “thoroughly prepared for their fundamental responsibilities.”
- “Leaders have carefully structured an ambitious curriculum that prepares trainees to be reflective and competent practitioners”. The curriculum content is organised to “complement trainees’ development, with key aspects such as safeguarding, behaviour and adaptive teaching suitably foregrounded.”
- Course leaders demonstrate commitment to educational research, with “seamless interweaving of education theories and research into the subject-specific aspects of the curriculum,” which Ofsted stated made the experiences of York trainees “distinctive”.

Ofsted inspectors also recognised how the work of the ITE team and the Partnership at the University of York contributes to the civic mission enshrined in the University Strategy noting that the University is “committed in its mission to work for the public good. Course leaders fulfil this by providing a stream of high-quality teachers to the region’s schools. This provider is the central hub around which an exceptionally strong network of schools has been built. The University of York is an innovative and outward-facing institution leading the continual development of ITE locally and beyond. The relentless drive for excellence benefits schools across the local area.”

With hindsight six months on, our Ofsted report really is a testament to the hard work of teacher education colleagues both at the University and in our partner schools to produce excellent new teachers for all children in our region’s schools. It was heartening to see that the University ITE Partnership’s commitment to delivering excellent initial teacher education was recognised, precisely so that into the future, generations of Yorkshire & Humberside children will succeed in reaching their potential as learners as a result of outstanding teaching from York-trained graduates.

In other course developments, the ITE market review Stage 2 of reaccreditation kept the PGCE Team busy until March 2024 as we undertook further meetings with our DfE ITE associate to check that we were “ready to deliver” from 2024-25. We piloted an ITAP week in January with our partner schools, from which we have learnt a great deal for 2024-25 delivery of four ITAPs. And we have created a whole mentor curriculum ready for 2024-25. The reaccreditation process is now completed in full, and we must thank those partner school staff who acted as critical friends as we tried out ideas and tested developments for schools who will experience their introduction at the chalkface from 2024/25 onwards. Part of what makes York’s ITE partnership so special is how its school mentors and Professional Tutors genuinely work in partnership with university PGCE staff to improve the course and the training experience for our beginning teachers. Never has this been truer than during the whole Reaccreditation process from 2021 to 2024. Thank you, colleagues.

As part of those developments, alongside our ITE colleagues from YSJ and STA, we have successfully run two regional mentor conferences during the summer term, and a separate bespoke University of York Mentor Conference, so that all of the mentors in the UoY ITE partnership will have successfully completed 6 hours of their DfE-mandated 20 hours of training by July 2024, before we even reach 2024-25. It has been an enormous delight to welcome brilliant mentors in each of our respective partnerships to give the keynote lecture on why mentoring is such an excellent role to take on as a teacher, and what benefits it brings to your own professional development as a teacher when working with a beginning teacher. Bringing over 400 mentors together across the mentor conference days has been a marker of the excellent level of mentoring expertise that we can bring to beginning teachers in this region.

In addition, across the region of Yorkshire and Humberside, various universities have come together to devise key mentoring principles which will underpin all of our respective mentor curricula. What this means is that if mentors complete their DfE-mandated training with University of York during 2024/25 they won’t need to redo this in 2025/26 if they then host a beginning teacher from either YSJ, LBU, LTU, Sheffield, Huddersfield or Bradford College/Leeds SCITT, as each of our mentoring curricula has been audited to meet those regional mentoring principles. We are very conscious that our mentors are experts, but they are busy experts who won’t have time or capacity to redo training in future years, so this enables your school’s mentors to confidently host trainees from all of North/West Yorkshire’s universities.

The whole PGCE team has undertaken thirty hours of DfE-mandated Lead Mentor training during 2023-24, alongside our ITE colleagues at the Universities of Nottingham and Sheffield. We have taken part in several days of teaching and joint mentoring conferences with our South Yorkshire and East Midlands University colleagues (although it ended up being just one conference, thanks to Ofsted visiting in January.....). We have learnt an enormous amount more about ITE mentoring, about our assumptions underpinning how we run our course, about terminology we have used without questioning its origin and veracity, about two dozen theories or more of mentoring and coaching new teachers, and about how best to mentor our mentors well. Lots of this learning has found its way into our new mentor curriculum, and some of this learning we have already shared with UoY ITE Partnership mentors this side of September in our regional mentoring conferences. The Lead Mentor programme has also challenged us to revisit our more familiar programme “terms” and “phrases” such that we have questioned, revisited and renamed much in our course going forwards. For example, we have renamed one major part of the University of York ITE course from WSI (Whole School Issues) which will soon become SCS (Schools, Community and Society) for two huge reasons:

- The I in WSI stands for “issues” which suggests concerns, and as a team we’ve decided that aspects that affect all schools are not necessarily “concerns” or “issues”;
- SCS (Schools, Community and Society) captures the wider remit all our partnership schools undertake daily with parents, guardians, outside agencies and the wider school community for each of our partner school’s individual contexts. It also recognises that ultimately, the pupils our beginning teachers, mentors and professional tutors teach will leave their school to enter society and the specific community a school sits within as young adults. How we prepare our pupils for their adult lives is part and parcel of the work of a school, alongside the specialist curriculum area every educator expertly teaches.

You will probably spot a few other changes during 2024-25 and be introduced to some of these throughout your mentor training programme, all of which demonstrates a much deeper understanding of what it means to enact high quality ITE programming and to mentor beginning teachers well.

From 2024-25, we commence delivery of a new PGCE Primary course, at first with our Lead Partner, Pathfinder. We have appointed two new Primary members of staff: Dr Emma Clarke – PGCE Primary Programme Lead; and Kelly Reppold – PGCE Primary Associate Tutor. We are very excited to get started on delivering the PGCE Primary course, which Emma has been developing with Pathfinder colleagues since December 2023. Bringing the region’s primary schools into partnership is a natural next step for ITE development in our Partnership, so please do let primary friends and colleagues know.

From 2025-26, we will also work with a new partner: Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academies Trust (including All Saints School, York) to deliver both primary and secondary ITE programmes in both York and Middlesbrough. We have spent time this year developing the new programmes with NPCAT staff, and will commence admissions onto their courses from this October ready for September 2025.

Unfortunately we will be saying goodbye to two stalwart members of university PGCE staff this summer, both of whom will be missed enormously by school and university colleagues: Caroline Capper (Schools Partnership Facilitator) and Helen Snelson (CA Lead for History). We wish them both well in their next chapters but they know they are welcome back to visit Team PGCE at any time.

Every year our Chief External gives us feedback on our course on behalf of the external examiner team so I will end this year’s newsletter introduction with her words:

**“In conclusion, despite the challenges in the sector, it is crucial to celebrate high-quality subject-specific provision, especially at this time of the year. The cohort embarking on their professional journey is a credit to you. By excelling in these areas, you are effectively preparing new teachers who are knowledgeable, skilled, and ready to meet the demands of the modern classroom.”**

**Chief External Examiner, May 2024**

Thank you to all our lead partners and partnership school staff for making this possible. We look forward to working together with all our schools again in 2024/25.



**Professor Claire E. Ball-Smith**  
**Director of Initial Teacher Training**

## **A message from our Heads of Department by Kathryn Asbury & Vanita Sundaram**

We are so proud of our PGCE Team and their achievements this year. Not only have they nurtured yet another cohort of new teachers for the region and beyond but they also withstood a very long-awaited visit from Ofsted.

And it's fair to say that they more than withstood it. Over almost a week of intensive interrogation our PGCE colleagues demonstrated the excellence of our PGCE provision with laser-sharp focus, wisdom and dignity. We were particularly pleased that Ofsted quite rightly acknowledged the leadership of our PGCE programme as being outstanding. As HoDs we felt a warm glow seeing how well the team's work came across, and how positively our students and partner schools spoke about this wonderful team and their wonderful work.

The teacher education landscape continues to be challenging but we couldn't have a better team of teacher educators, or a better teacher-education community throughout the region, with which to meet those challenges. We are grateful to the team, our partner schools, mentors and students for everything you do to make sure that each new cohort of children and young people has a cohort of excellent teachers waiting to greet them each September.

And next September is particularly exciting for us as we will greet our first ever cohort of primary PGCE trainees. So here's to September, but first, here's to a very well earned rest for all of you.

Wishing you all a very happy summer holiday.



# School Direct Routes



## All credit to our wonderful All Saints' Cohort: you have been a joy.

BY KATE VERNON-REES  
ALL SAINTS, YORK

At the beginning of the year a group of wonderful humans came to join us for that roller coaster ride that is the life of a trainee. There have been the highs: the joys of charity days, filling the Minster with over 1500 people and being stunned by the amazing quality of the Crucible. There have been the dips of deadlines, the pits of pebble pad and the cajoling of pupils into getting used to a new teacher in front of them – and now the track is so nearly complete: you are ready to stroll off from your carriage into the wider world: bringing into it enthusiasm, energy and creativity.

Enough of the extended metaphor. This has been an exceptionally strong cohort whom it has been an absolute joy to host. As a group they have thrown themselves into the life of the school and have been really valued by staff and pupils alike. As with any institution and any academic year the past three terms have not been without their challenges but this cohort have supported us and adapted to the whole school changes that have occurred.

As ever I need to say a big thank you to the University for its unending, unstinting support and help; to all our host teachers and mentors who work so hard to help and guide these fledgling teachers on their journey and to our pupils who just love having a trainee teaching them. Also, a big shout out to our amazing librarians Sarah Firm and Hattie Smith who involve the trainees at every step of their journey and give them so many opportunities to work with our lovely young people.



Finally, we are a faith school and we pray for you all as you take your journey into an educational world which you will help improve and develop. Thank you!



## Professional Pride

BY ANDY YOUNG  
**PATHFINDER  
TEACHING SCHOOL  
HUB**



This year our Pathfinder Teaching School Hub (working in partnership with University of York and Sheffield Hallam University) cohort was made up of 24 fabulous trainee teachers representing a diverse range of backgrounds. I'm very proud of the fact that (at the time of writing) only 1 of our trainees is yet to secure employment in education for September 2024. That said, my proudest ITT moment this year was being fortunate enough to be in a meeting with an Ofsted Inspector and 3 of our trainees during the Ofsted inspection of the University of York's PGCE programme. I heard our trainees feedback how much they knew about inclusion with reference to SEND in particular. They were able to articulate how their knowledge of SEND has permeated through all aspects of their programme and training, how they have studied the graduated approach, and how they have had the opportunity to consider inclusion in all of their taught WSI sessions at Pathfinder.



This makes me proud because it goes to show how much this ethos is built into the fabric of our curriculum. It makes me proud because our ITTs are confident about SEND. It makes me proud because inclusion is put front row and centre of what we do, and is never a bolt on. It makes me proud because our young people with additional needs are now better understood, seen, and supported, so that they may flourish.

Well done to all of our Pathfinder TSH trainees - may you enjoy a long, compassion-filled, ambitious and prosperous career in the best profession in the world.



# Curriculum Area Focus

## Team English 2023-24

### Old Dog, New Tricks

BY CATHERINE SHAWYER  
ENGLISH CA LEAD TUTOR



It is difficult to believe that another exhilarating York PGCE English rollercoaster year has just come to its end and I find myself sitting proud, happy but exhausted, at my desk writing a piece for our annual newsletter which is always the most glorious celebratory read once it has been created and collated. This year I have chosen to share with you my reflections on what I learnt through our pilot ITaP week.

ITaP stands for Intensive Training and Practice and will become a mandatory element of all ITT programmes in England and Wales from September 2024 as part of new Government requirements for initial teacher training. According to the DfE, ITaP's main aim is to "strengthen the link between evidence and classroom practice" so course tutors need to design a training experience which gives "trainees appropriate input, scaffolded practice and feedback in relation to selected foundational and specific aspects of the training curriculum".

I must confess that when I first got my head around what ITaP was, I was sceptical on a number of levels. I could not see how we would be able to fit in this new requirement into an already packed programme, and I feared the disruption that might occur to the carefully sequenced English ITT curriculum that my colleague, Nicola Towle, and I had refined over the years, however

there was no place for such negative thinking: We had decided as a PGCE Tutor team to try a pilot ITaP week so Nicola and I did the professional thing and set about planning it using the templates and guidance provided for the team by Georgia Ramsay, our PGCE Lead Geography Tutor.

And of course, the week after Christmas, our ITaP English week happened...

and...

**it went so well!**

It was a rich opportunity for trainees to delve deeper into research and observe and reflect upon expert classroom practice focused on the importance of English teachers live modelling the reading and writing of texts for pupils. Trainees also had ample opportunities to practise live modelling for themselves, firstly in safe, supportive spaces in small groups of fellow trainees. Feedback from trainees and school mentors was overwhelmingly positive.

Reflecting personally on what I learnt from planning for and delivering the ITaP week was the importance of keeping an open mind and being prepared to experiment with new ideas, no matter how experienced you are as a teacher or tutor (I am still learning after 35 years!) Additionally, it was a very clear lesson in how important it is to embrace new ways of working with enthusiasm and energy. I have never subscribed to the box-ticking mentality and believe very firmly that if something is worth doing, it is worth doing well. This, I believe, is a key, underpinning principle of our York PGCE provision overall not something which applies exclusively to me.

Although I still have a great deal of work to do to ensure that three further ITaP weeks are ready to become part of next year's York PGCE English course, I am now looking forward to welcoming the fresh insights and improvements this will bring to what is already, according to trainee and mentor feedback, a highly valued, successful and stimulating initial teacher education and training course.

# Team Geography 2023-24

BY GEORGIA RAMSAY  
GEOGRAPHY CA LEAD TUTOR

Each year I think hard about what makes this cohort unique or different from others that have gone before and it was the Ofsted visit in January which really cemented what a great bunch of geographers I've had this year. During an intense few days, help was willingly offered and whatever I asked for was met, not only with compliance, but with kindness, effort and generosity. There was a genuine feeling that we were all 'in it together' and one trainee even sacrificed part of their after school birthday celebrations to ensure they had a chance to meet with the inspector and represent our subject. This generosity and willingness to pull together when the pressure is on, is what makes this cohort really stand out for me.

Geography is the only subject where fieldwork is a compulsory part of the subject, but it is an aspect of our role which can really divide teachers, due to the time and logistics required to do it justice. Much to my delight, Team Geography 2023-24 seem to have really embraced fieldwork both at university and within their placement schools, with one trainee already making plans for adding more fieldwork into their KS3 curriculum ahead of them starting in September. I think between the 8 geography teachers this year, we worked out that they had been on more than 20 field trips, including our autumn trip to Leeds where we explored urban inequalities and sustainable urban housing, and our most recent trip to the classic Holderness coast.

A highlight of our Geography PGCE is our annual sustainability event and this year we invited more than 70 KS4 students from our partnership schools to an enrichment day at the University of York, where they had to re-imagine York's Guildhall Ward into a more sustainable space.

Not only did the trainees deliver an engaging, challenging and enjoyable day for the students but I was really impressed with their flexibility, professionalism and calm exteriors when we had to amend timings during the day. This adaptability is the true sign of a brilliant teacher.

Finally, I would like to finish by thanking the brilliant mentors and geography departments that we have worked with this year for the time, patience, humour, kindness and dedication that has been given to the trainees this year. Growing really great Geography teachers really is a team effort and we couldn't do it without you.



# Team History 2023-24

BY HELEN SNELSON AND RUTH LINGARD  
HISTORY CA LEAD TUTORS

We have had a fantastic cohort of 'beginning History teachers' this year. They have impressed Helen and I with their talent, resilience and quirky senses of humour. Their future schools will be very privileged to have them.

A highlight this year has been the Active History teaching in the classroom session, when trainees threw themselves into: tabard wearing to create living timelines, ball throwing to simulate the Cuban missile crisis and the stuffed toy trauma of the re-enactment of the Harrying of the North!



Helen and I have thoroughly enjoyed visiting the trainees in their placement schools and seeing the fantastic relationships they have built up with their classes.

The academic year finished with a real highlight when the University was able to host some of the leading thinkers in the History world, Christine Counsell, Mike Hill, Jonny Grande and Hugh Richards who all presented on the theme of 'History's superpower: story at KS3'. The trainees were given a really inspirational day of CPD to finish the term.

As usual we completed the year with the York local history challenge – the winners being Alex and Tanya who managed to photograph 1000 years of York History in super quick time! This was followed by a picnic lunch in front of the Minster.



Finally, it was lovely to meet up with previous University of York History trainees from previous years at an event at Mansion House, York. The History teaching world is a very close-knit community and it was lovely to catch up with our kinsfolk once more.



# Team Maths 2023-24

BY HELEN GRANGER  
MATHS CA LEAD TUTOR

Huge congratulations to these maths teachers! Ready to bring a wealth of expertise, skill and enthusiasm to your new roles. You have been an excellent group to work with, thoughtful, considered and well informed. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to be part of your journey to becoming the successful maths teacher you now are. The classes under your care will benefit from your subject knowledge, your ability to 'teach for understanding' and your commitment to their success. The departments you are joining will benefit from your collegial spirit, your imagination and your problem solving skills. The whole school community is enhanced by your contribution; the profession is fortunate to have you!

As we celebrate this cohort of maths teachers, leaving the PGCE for their new departments, embarking on their teaching careers, I have an additional quiet moment of reflection to myself as I close my tenth year of leading the maths PGCE. Ten years older, ten cohorts wiser, I am hugely grateful for all that each unique group has taught me.

So cohort 10, how could I capture your year? In many ways, this was a year of 'firsts' - first ITaP, first inspection, you may be surprised to learn that you were the first year of the cryptic crossword ritual. These 'firsts' can feel challenging, overwhelming, even a little uncomfortable; each 'first' means becoming a novice again. However, it is these 'firsts' that keep us sharp, keep us moving forwards. These are also the sentiments I wish to pass on to you to help you keep enjoying each every year of your career. Keep noticing and valuing the 'firsts', they will help you keep growing as the years pass.

Well done, I am unbelievably proud of you all, Helen



BY PAULA KELLY  
MATHS CA ASSOCIATE TUTOR

From day one I knew this was going to be a fantastic year with our Maths trainees. From reviewing their pre-induction week tasks it was clear that they had a passion for maths and also in discovering the most powerful and effective way to convey this to students.

As we come towards the end of the year and we review their initial thoughts and hopes from those tasks it's so pleasing to see how their hard work and careful reflections have supported them to become the effective and inspiring teachers they had described barely nine months ago.

One of the many joys of this role is seeing how trainees are able to bring their own personalities and perspectives to the materials they are delivering. Visiting their placements and observing lessons made me so proud to see the solid pedagogy, carefully considered explanations and fantastic relationships they'd managed to build with their students.

Reading the assignments also provided an insight into the teachers our lovely cohort will become. The creativity trainees had used when deciding their area of focus for assignment 3 acted as a window into their views of which particular elements of classroom practice could have the most positive impact on their students, from the use of drawing pads to the most effective way to support EAL learners.

I'm so proud of this highly skilled and reflective group it's been a pleasure to work with and I look forward to seeing them in their new schools when I come to visit our next cohort!



# Team MFL 2023-24

BY MIRJAM BUEHLER  
MFL CA LEAD TUTOR

## **Scarborough or Tunisia?**

Embarking on a PGCE in Languages with us, can lead to the most unusual and life-changing questions – such as the one above!

Each and every one in this cohort is an amazing linguist and speaks at least three languages (in addition to English!) ranging from Arabic to Italian and Portuguese to Urdu to Welsh.

It was a pleasure to see them develop into inspirational languages teachers of the future! We are extremely proud of a cohort that has really understood that being a languages teacher is so much more than drilling new vocab, grammar rules and phonics. Therefore, internationalisation, diversity and inclusion were a focus in the taught and enacted curriculum experience.

Therefore, it was a year of ‘firsts’ for all:

- For further internationalisation of our curriculum with speakers from China (teacher AND pupil)
- Full cycle of the pedagogic exchange with Münster University! A unique and fantastic opportunity to experience teacher training and school placement in Germany.
- Festival of Languages for Y5 and Y6 in a York Primary School! It was an amazing experience for our beginning teachers, pupils and colleagues.



- Visit to the LA led Resource Provision for sensory impaired children and young people in Bradford, offering 34 places. Pupils receive a specialist curriculum and staff working there have been instrumental in bringing about the NEW GCSE in sign language!
- Opportunity to meet EAL pupils face-to-face and their EAL-Coordinator, hearing their stories and challenges and how the school offers them and their families a 'life line' by helping them to adjust to a new way of living and learning.
- The first cohort to experience reaccreditation and Ofsted in the same year!

We want to thank our fantastic cohort of linguists! Their legacy will be visible (go to Reception!) and felt well beyond the end of the ITE year.

We wish you every success in the future wherever the job takes you – Scarborough or Tunisia!

Mirjam and Liz (CA Tutors)



# Team Science 2023-24

BY LEANNE MASON AND SIMON QUINNELL  
SCIENCE CA LEAD TUTORS

Wow! What a fantastic year we have had. We are really proud of this year's Science PGCE cohort, it has been a truly wonderful year to see the group gain confidence in the classroom. This year has seen more creativity and risk-taking return to the classroom where more innovative activities have been used to engage pupils. Embracing practical work was a real highlight.

We visited Cranedale field centre to look at both laboratory work and field work that can be used to promote understanding and engagement, where we dissected owl pellets, produced biological drawings, played outdoor games and went pond dipping.

Professional enrichment saw the group attend a variety of settings including SEND Schools, a pupil referral unit and a Community Centre amongst others. The knowledge they gained and shared with the group (and us tutors) was really valuable and interesting, giving us all a wider view of education in and around York.



We were lucky to have Lucy Ireland, a trainee from the 2022-3 cohort join us to talk about her ECT year. Lucy has had an amazing first year in school and we really enjoyed hearing about her creative approaches in the classroom.

We are delighted that every trainee has secured a first post role, ahead of September, with many working in local schools. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the brilliant mentors and their science departments that we have worked with this year for the kindness and professional guidance they have shown our trainees.

We wish you all well in your new posts and a fantastic summer holiday to take a well-earned rest!  
Leanne, Simon and Moira



# The PGCE Team

## Spotlight on the SPFs

BY CAROLINE CAPPER AND VIC ALLEN,  
SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP FACILITATORS

Well what a year this has been!

Planning for the 2023-24 cohort actually began in March 2023 (6 months before the start of the course) when Caroline and Vic were busy liaising with partnership schools about placements and also trying to match trainees to schools taking into account any personal circumstances, transport options and travel distance. The allocations process is complex and fluid so often we find that it cannot be finalised until right at the start of September.

Then, when we welcomed the cohort to campus, there was a buzz of excitement as we got to meet the new faces and introduce them to the PGCE course. The induction phase is always a busy time for SPFs as the WSI programme gets into full swing, with numerous colleagues from across the partnership coming to share their experiences and expertise. This is such a stimulating and enriching time in the PGCE calendar.

During the autumn term, SPFs are actively engaged in providing mentor training to colleagues in schools and coordinating with Professional Tutors to finalise placement 2 offers. Additionally, they manage assignment marking and conduct monitoring visits alongside the rest of the PGCE Team.

January is when we make final allocations for placement 2. This year, we were also busily preparing for reaccreditation and the changes to ITE provision following the DfE's market review. It was also in January that we had the call that Ofsted would be visiting us.

Although the week was intense, it also allowed us to share the work that we are really passionate about and filled us with a sense of pride when we reflected on all that we do as the PGCE team and the wider partnership. The support we got from colleagues and schools was nothing short of brilliant. Thank you to everyone who contributed and sent warm wishes.

The Spring term continued to be a time when the SPFs focussed on reaccreditation and also launched the Teaching and Learning project, which proved to be an exciting time involving workshops, interviews and podcasts where the SPFs, along with Helen Granger, developed a range of professional development resources to support future beginner teachers and mentors to make the most out of the mentoring relationship. These resources will be shared across the partnership throughout 2024-25 and beyond. Again, thank you to everyone who took part in this project.

As the Summer term began, SPFs focused on placement allocations for the next cohort and worked collectively with ITTE providers from across the region to design and deliver the ITTE Regional Mentor's conference, which provided the first 6 hours of the DfE's new mandatory 20-hour mentor training.

Amongst all this, the PGCE team has been working with colleagues from Nottingham University to cover Lead Mentor Training to meet the DfE's requirements for reaccreditation.

As you can see, this has been another busy year for the SPFs. There are always ongoing tasks to be completed, such as the regular bulletin, offering bespoke mentor training, personalised support for trainees, assignment marking, support and training in the wider university alongside interviewing and recruitment activities.

We have thoroughly enjoyed working with the 2023/24 cohort and colleagues from the wider partnership. Like teaching, this job is demanding but also incredibly rewarding. Nothing gives us more pleasure than seeing our trainees develop their professional skills over the course of 10 months and then graduate with smiles on their faces.

Congratulations to you all and have a wonderful summer!





# PGCE Admin

CHARLOTTE LEAP

## **1. How long have you worked in the Education Department at UoY?**

I've been here for nearly two years now - doesn't time fly!

## **2. What are your main roles in supporting the PGCE?**

It is very varied... corresponding with trainees and partnership schools, sending out information about placements, working on admissions, PebblePad, assignments... the list goes on!

## **3. What do you enjoy most about working in the Education Department?**

The best part of my role is working with so many amazing people - the admin team, the PGCE tutors, the trainees, the partnership schools - it is a wonderful community.

# Education Reception

AARON GRIBBLE

## **1. How long have you worked in the Education Department at UoY?**

4 years (and a bit!)

## **2. What are your main roles in supporting the PGCE?**

Administration of the admissions process (answering general enquiries about the process, organising subject tests and setting up interviews). First point of contact for trainees when they are on campus.

## **3. What do you enjoy most about working in the Education Department?**

Above all the people I work with. We are a friendly and supportive team. Feeling appreciated. (Teachers understand the importance of positive feedback!) Meeting trainees. It's nice to see familiar faces on the first day of the course who I have met on interview days.

# School Partnership Colleagues



## Partnership Forum

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

As I reflect on another busy year hosting ITT students here at Selby High School, I would like to thank and congratulate each and every one of them who undertook placements with us. Seeing them progress and develop into teachers in their own right has been one of the highlights of my year. They enter the Early Career Teacher phase equipped with the expertise and skills to make a positive impact in their new schools – well done to you all!

Another highlight for us as a placement school was the ITaP pilot week. It is great to be partnered with such a forward thinking PGCE team who really want to get the most out of the ITaP experience and who were proactive in trialling this. I just know that the ITaP weeks are going to be a real strength of the University's PGCE offer from the 24/25 academic year.

The word that springs to mind when I look back on leading on ITT in my school throughout this past academic has to be opportunity. The university have offered me so many professional development opportunities which have really pushed me out of my comfort zone and have enabled me to upskill as ITT Lead.

In October I was approached and asked to put together a training video on "The Role of the Professional Tutor" which was to be shared across all of the nearly 70 schools in the UoY partnership. It was a really interesting process from the planning stages to the finished product and a huge compliment to me and my team of amazing subject mentors to have been asked. Nothing I do as ITT Lead is done alone; we are a successful partner school because of the fantastic support from the University and because of the incredibly talented mentoring team I have honed over the past few years.

In December I had the privilege of meeting the MFL trainees and being a guest lecturer for the afternoon. I chose the topic of "Challenging the More Able Learner in the MFL Classroom" as this is a part of my own teaching practice which I know is a strength. The lecture included lots of input from me but also opportunities for discussion and a chance to apply what they had learned to a practical task. For the practical task they had to select a double-page spread from a textbook and adapt some of the activities with a more able learner in mind. The lecture was well received and evaluated positively by the trainees and by Mirjam Bühler.

In January the PGCE team finally had “The Call” and during the week of 22nd January Ofsted inspected their ITTE programme. Two trainees at Selby High School were visited as part of the process which involved lesson observations, meetings with trainees, meetings with subject mentors and with me as ITT Lead and my school’s Principal. It was my second time in under five months being involved with an Ofsted inspection as our school was inspected in October. It was golden opportunity to be able to sing the praises of the PGCE team and all they do for the trainees and the partner schools. I have no doubt that the next inspection will be graded Outstanding plans are already underway to respond positively to the constructive feedback the inspectorate provided.

In June I had a real “pinch me” moment when I jointly delivered the keynote address at the regional mentoring conference at York St John University. This was centred around the benefits of mentoring for trainees, mentors and schools and also featured anecdotes about trainee/mentor experiences. I would not be in a position to have done this had I not been given the chance to be so fully involved with the Partnership. In saying yes to every opportunity this academic year I have really come out of my comfort zone and have become so much more confident in leading on ITT as a result; to a point where I feel comfortable talking to my wider network of colleagues about this.

I am also now more than two thirds of the way through the NPQLTD which is being facilitated by Pathfinder Teaching School Hub. The NPQLTD has already been instrumental in refining my abilities to effectively lead emerging teachers and their subject mentors. The insights I gain from the course will be invaluable to further improving our offer as a host school.

I would like to offer my warmest congratulations to all of the University of York PGCE students who will be awarded Qualified Teacher Status in the coming weeks. You are joining a profession like no other!

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

Rebecca Harwood  
Teacher of Spanish and ITT & New Staff Coordinator  
Selby High School

LYDIA BINKS,  
PROFESSIONAL TUTOR AT GARFORTH ACADEMY

Moving from a background in Early Years, my teaching career began at Leicester College in 2003. I completed my Certificate in Education and taught students from the age of 16 years, often having mature students in my groups. Over the period of ten years, I became part of the Quality Assurance team, and observed colleagues regularly and participated in delivering staff CPD.

In 2013, I took the leap into teaching in a school, which was a huge learning curve. Adapting to being called Miss instead of Lydia wasn't easy, but I loved the challenge of the role, and quickly achieved QTLS status.

As Head of Department, teaching Health and Social Care, and Childcare, I liaised with schools and nurseries weekly, as my KS5 students went out into early years placements every week. As a natural 'people person', visiting the settings was a favourite part of the role, and I enjoyed watching my students grow in confidence and ability.

However, I felt something was missing, as unlike my colleagues who had experienced studying for a degree, I had gone into teaching through the FE route. I had achieved other qualifications along the way, but not that degree, and the more I thought about it, the more I wanted it. So, in 2016, I enrolled as a part-time student on the Masters in Education at Leeds Trinity University, and during the three years of the course, I had a double knee replacement, became a grandma, and graduated with a Distinction!

Over that time, I was growing in confidence, and found being a student again so interesting. Seeing things from the other side, I knew I wanted to continue supporting fellow students. I started the DEEPs role in 2021 and since then have become more visible around the whole school, supporting Teaching and Learning through CPD and QAs, coaching and mentoring, conducting lesson drop-ins and this year taking the role of coordinating PGCE students. As a newcomer to the role, I found it a huge responsibility, but as soon as I began, I absolutely loved it! I have been working with several providers, so my organisational skills were tested, but I was never afraid to ask for guidance if it was needed.

I found the university staff were on hand whenever I had any questions, and responses to my emails were always prompt. I was delighted to be asked to contribute to York's Ofsted inspection, and it was great to hear the other Professional Tutors talking as positively as I was about their experiences with the university.

At this stage, I am waiting to hear if I will be coordinating the ITT students again in September, or the ECT students, as I have been appointed Assistant Principal for one year from September 2024 to cover maternity leave. I am still pinching myself! The experience of working with universities, and the associated learning this year has gone a huge way in helping me towards this promotion, and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity I have been given.

I have three grandchildren now, and my eldest Freddie (6) has warned me that my new job means a lot of hard work and might be stressful. Out of the mouths of babes! Watch this space Freddie!



## NEVER STOP LISTENING AND LEARNING BY ROD SIMS, YORK HIGH SCHOOL

I never wanted to be a teacher and I certainly never wanted to be a Headteacher but here I am after 28 years retiring as the Headteacher of York High School. I have been a Teacher, Head of Year, Subject Leader, Assistant Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher and I have loved my career. There is no greater privilege than to have a positive impact on young people's lives and I hope that I have achieved that.

I went to a York Boys Grammar School in the early eighties where respect was a one way street, students were still caned and routinely embarrassed by teachers. Only a handful of teachers were a beacon of positivity and care for their students. My experience of school shaped me as a teacher in that I would not become what had gone before.

After leaving Salford University I finally fell into teaching after spells working in pubs, selling advertising, digging sewers and baking. From my first placement I loved the hundreds of interactions that you get with students every day. I made some shocking mistakes and taught some truly dreadful lessons just like we all do as trainees. This never changes, as you progress through your career there will always be lessons that could have gone better, the great teachers always use these lessons to improve.

My PGCE was Economics and Business studies and my first job was at Andrew Marvell in Hull as a Teacher of Business Studies, Maths and Typing. Quite a surprise as I can not touch type to this day! After three years I moved back to York as a Year Leader at Archbishop Holgate's School which was in the middle of its journey to the Outstanding School it is today. My year group of 80 consisted of 4 sets of twins. There is a time in your career that you look back on especially fondly and Archbishops was that for me. I loved the Head of Year role, my year groups had some amazing kids in them and I made lifelong friends with some of the staff.

After 5 really happy years at AHS I moved to Tadcaster Grammar School as an assistant Headteacher for 3 years before I started as Deputy Headteacher at York High School. I love York High, the staff, the students and the community. We all join teaching because we want to make a difference but at York High you really know that you are making that difference. I would never have become a Headteacher if it was not for the Ofsted Inadequate judgement. The staff, students and the community did not deserve or need that label. I responded to that label Inadequate like Marty Macfly responds to being called “Chicken” in Back to the Future. We worked tirelessly to return to Good and were delighted when that became a reality in 2022. After a period of illness (all good now!) I am sadly retiring at the end of the term.

If I have any advice it is that Education is a relationship based profession. At the end of my career I stand on the shoulders of those such as Gill Jones in Hull, Anne Lawes at Archbishop’s and David Ellis at YHS. Never stop listening and learning. The advice I would give to anyone starting in the profession is to keep smiling and to never forget the difference you make to the lives of the students and staff around you. I can walk away knowing that I have made my small part of the world a better place, that’s why we teach.



# School Partnership Colleagues

REFLECTIONS ON THE ITTE REGIONAL MENTORING CONFERENCE

BY JESSICA DIXON

MENTOR AND 2 I/C IN MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AT  
ARCHBISHOP HOLGATE'S SCHOOL

...and poof! Just like that, as if by some magic (or miracle some may be thinking at this point) another academic year is done. It never ceases to amaze me not only how quickly the academic year passes by, but also how much can change in that time. Teaching is simply a vocation, which is constantly evolving and which constantly challenges us to rise to the challenge of each new development.



I imagine that is what our University of York beginning teachers have seen first-hand in their first of year of experience “on the job” but it is something somewhat experienced teachers know very well. That is perhaps why I enjoy being a mentor to beginning teachers so much. The mentor role gives me an opportunity to help to prepare our new colleagues both mentally and practically for the fast-paced environment of the education sector, but also allows me to constantly question my own professional development. I don't think our beginning teachers always realise that they help us as established teachers just as much as we help them. For that I am thankful, even if it sometimes makes me feel a little old and technologically out of touch!



As part of this continued professional development, I recently attended the ITTE Regional Mentor Conference (jointly organised by UoY, YSJ and STA). In all honesty, I wasn't entirely sure what to expect from the conference but was looking forward to the possibility of chatting and networking with other mentors and an opportunity to gather some new ideas that could help future beginning teachers.

On arrival, we were warmly welcomed by Pathfinder staff and with hot drinks and refreshments (which felt like a luxurious Monday morning!) and were given a handout, on which the plan for the day entailed. Once we had filled our boots with coffee, we were shown to a lecture hall and had our introduction to the day. It was great to hear from both current and previous mentors and hear both their positive and most memorable experiences of mentoring. This allowed us also to reflect on why we mentor and what it offers us on a personal and professional level, which was very uplifting as this is an aspect, which you often don't have the opportunity to truly think about. We were also shown various models as or theories as to what the role of the mentor is. All three models; Maldarez' Iceberg, Maldarez and Bodoczky's Three Facets of Reflection and Ambrosetti et al Table of roles of the Mentor all resonated with me somewhat but the Three Facets of Reflection was the key model that gave me real food for thought. The three facets are essentially three paths the mentor can follow to support and guide the beginning teacher to master the art of successful self reflection. Further to this, I agreed with the principle that just because we as mentors or host teachers are modelling new ideas to the beginning teacher, this does not therefore mean that the trainee should want or be expected to be a "mini me" (for want of a better description). This career requires constant reflection and this can be done through modelling- how can the beginning teacher achieve the same aim as seen in the modelling but in a way that suits their own developing teaching style?

I have always believed that the ideas we give to beginning teachers really are just that -*ideas*- and hopefully will also give them food for thought and options to choose from, when the idea bank begins to run a little dry. It also made me realise that the fact that secondary beginning teachers in particular will likely work with a larger amount of host teachers could mean the overwhelm could be high if all host teachers modelled something entirely differently, which can so often be the case.

In session two, we were in smaller “breakout” groups and were asked to dig a little deeper into our roles as mentors. We were asked what we consider our key roles to be and what attributes we believe to be most important for this role. In smaller groups we discussed this in greater detail and it was incredibly insightful to hear from other mentors and their experiences.

In my group, we discussed the importance of strong emotional intelligence and awareness of the beginning teacher’s background with regards to their own school experience. We all agreed that this can make a huge difference to a beginning teacher and that it is incredibly important to find out such basics at the start of the placement. Colleagues in my group expressed that key questions such as “ what do you expect from ...me? From this placement? From this career?” had led to productive conversations and had also meant that there was a greater understanding between the mentor and beginning teacher and that any misconceptions were debunked from an early stage. I- as a total “people person” and who is constantly fascinated by how others think and see the world, thought this was a brilliant idea.

Following these discussions, we as a group agreed on our “Five Principles for a Successful Trainee/ Beginning Teacher relationship, which were:

1. Gain a good understanding of the beginning teacher’s ambitions, beliefs and desires for their future and career.
2. ( As a mentor) be available and approachable.
3. Model strategies and planning but remain open to new ideas.
4. Have flexibility with workload
5. Ensure all targets are SMART

Of course, the ideas in each of the groups varied but I felt very happy with our agreed principles- so much so that I have stuck them in my office in school!

In our final session as part of the breakout sessions, we were provided with useful and also practical information with regards to the mental health and wellbeing of our beginning teachers on placement. The ITT year is an amazing but also very intense year of learning and I do believe that not all of our beginning teachers are kind to themselves in this regard. Many need help implementing healthy working habits, which will see them into their future careers. We discussed pre-emptive actions such as early meetings to discuss boundaries and expectations but also how to decide where on the scale our beginner teacher is from “healthy” to “unwell” and how to support our colleagues from reaching the latter end of the scale. The four key elements, which are deemed as pivotal to good mental health in the school setting are:

- Self acceptance
- A growth mindset
- Environmental mastery
- Autonomy (with a safety net of support in ITT year)

I wholeheartedly agree with this and again, it gave me great food for thought on returning to school as to how I could guide and support beginning teachers further to maintain a healthy state mentally (and therefore) physically on placement.

In Ambrosetti et al's model, a key element of the role of a mentor was "the protector", which makes a lot of sense when we consider our responsibility as mentors to keep an eye on our beginning teachers and their mental health whilst essentially in our care.

To end a really productive and successful conference, we gathered together once again to somewhat summarise the day and reflect on what we had discussed in the breakout rooms. By this point, the room was buzzing with chatter as so much of what had been discussed that day had spilled into the room and had fuelled so many conversations. A brilliant day, which exceeded my expectations- as did the lovely lunch provided by the university (high on the agenda!) The opportunity to network with other mentors was fantastic and I ultimately feel like my mentoring will take a real step up with the new insight I have gained from the conference.

Here's to another successful year in the academic year 2024-2025!



# Trainee Reflections

SURVIVING AND THRIVING ON THE PGCE  
BY RACHEL KENNADY, PGCE ENGLISH



Approximately 10 months ago I sat in a lecture hall which had proved tricky and stressful to find, surrounded by strangers listening to Professor Ball-Smith explain the course structure and the not insignificant amount we needed to learn in a short space of time. This thought did not alleviate my already hot and sticky feeling instead, inducing further fear and anxiety. I remember saying in my head that if teaching was the wrong decision I could always return to my former career and repeating it over like a mantra.

10 months on, I sat today in the same lecture hall celebrating the end of my PGCE year; now, I cannot imagine ever doing anything other than teaching. Those strangers have become some of my best friends, I no longer get lost on campus and training to teach has been the best decision I've made.

Changing careers, especially into something as consuming, reflective and tricky as teaching was always going to be difficult, and at times this year I have found the whole thing overwhelming. However, without exception the people I've met have been helpful, supportive and understanding. I have had the benefit of three fabulous mentors during my placements and now call them friends. Catherine and Nicola, the English CA tutors, are the kindest, wisest and most encouraging people you can imagine, and they champion their trainees the whole way. My fellow trainees are truly champions having tackled the incredible workload, emotionally draining days and self-doubt emerging the other side as extraordinary teachers. I feel incredibly lucky to have not just survived this year but thrived during it. I have found both an enriching and rewarding career and the best people in the world to share it with.

## AN EXPERIENCE LIKE NO OTHER, PROFESSIONAL ENRICHMENT AT THE JOSEPH TRUST BY ALINA RUDA, PGCE BIOLOGY

When Pete Crane, the manager of the Joseph Trust, came to talk to us back in September about the work he does, I knew this was something I wanted to get involved in.

The Joseph Trust is an amazing charity which provides alternative provision for students who struggle to engage with mainstream education. Located on some remote farmland, they provide students with an opportunity to gain practical life skills with the help of nature based activities. Students spend their days from 10am till 2pm engaging in activities such as cooking, den building, small animal care, cycling, canoeing, fishing, horticulture, woodworking and so much more.



While volunteering at The Joseph Trust, I got to experience not only the vast array of activities that these pupils have at their disposal but also a method of teaching that focuses on relationship building and developing life skills rather than academic achievement. It was truly inspiring to see how many of these pupils thrived in an environment where they were allowed to learn at their own pace and without the pressures of following a curriculum and strict behaviour policies.

Each day, I got to work with a different set of pupils, as most of them only attend once a week. Within the short four hours during which I engaged with the pupils on each day, I was pleased to discover how open and willing they were to engage with me as a volunteer. I got to hear about many of their backgrounds, hobbies and interests. This allowed me gain some insight into the types of challenges faced by these pupils and meant that no two days at The Joseph Trust were the same.

Volunteering at The Joseph Trust was an extremely eye opening and humbling experience and I would encourage anyone who is interested in exploring alternative provision to get involved with this amazing charity.



PROFESSIONAL ENRICHMENT AT THE ARC,  
THE MARVELL COLLEGE  
BY NATASHA PARKER, PGCE ENGLISH

As part of my PGCE, I spent my first placement at The Marvell College in Hull, which I now regard as one of the most enriching periods of my life, both personally and professionally. Initially, I was disheartened to learn that I had been assigned to Marvell as I was daunted by the long commute and the prospect of being the sole English trainee. However, my concerns were unfounded. I feel immensely privileged to have had the opportunity to work alongside the fantastic staff there and witness the school's unwavering commitment to its students. I had the privilege of engaging with their outstanding English department and I recently returned to support their coveted ARC program. Upon returning, I brought as many other trainees as I could with me, eager to share the incredible work being done at Marvell.

## INTERNATIONAL PEDAGOGIC EXPERIENCE BY MILLIE COTTRELL, PGCE MFL

As language learners and teachers, the opportunity to become involved in any kind of international cultural exchange is incredibly exciting!

Whilst some of the department spent a week in Münster, the rest of us were still able to participate in this experience when we hosted 12 German trainee-teachers in February. As part of this, we each delivered a group presentation to explain what it is like to become a teacher in our respective countries. Most notably, we learned that it takes around 6 years of training in order to qualify as a teacher in Germany!

Following this, we made the most of their time in York by meeting up several times and developing a friendship. The week gave me almost the same feeling as my Erasmus year and reminded us of the beauty, importance and utility of language-learning. Through language and cultural education, we are able to open our minds to other ideas and even develop friendships with people we otherwise would never have met.





## EXCELLENT RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY BY ERIN GONZALEZ, PGCE MFL

During my time on the PGCE, I was offered the opportunity to work with my placement 2 mentor and the PGCE team on a research project. It focused on identifying the most effective aspects of a mentor-mentee relationship and how these best work in terms of feedback methods and structure for mentor meetings.

We each considered which parts of the mentor meetings were the most helpful and analysed which formats were put in place for this. Similarly, I took part in an interview that offered advice to new PGCE trainees at crucial points over the course of the year and what they can do to help themselves at these points. All of this information has been taken by the university team and will be made into resources next year to aid new trainees in structuring their mentor meetings and allow both them and their mentors to know what to expect and how to prepare.

I thought that this project was incredibly interesting to work on as it allowed me the opportunity to reflect on how I had received feedback and reflected on my own practice throughout the year, which is something that I will be doing continuously throughout my teaching career.



## SUSTAINABILITY ENRICHMENT DAY BY STELLA RICHARDS, PGCE GEOGRAPHY

On Monday 10th June, the University of York's PGCE Geography students invited pupils from schools all across York to the University to attend their annual 'Sustainability Enrichment day'. The aim of the day was to educate pupils about sustainability, what it means, to challenge preconceptions and educate about what everyone can do to be more sustainable.

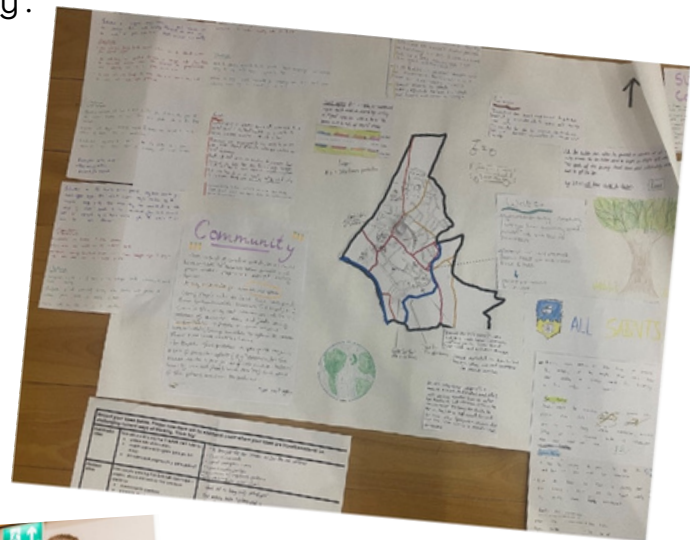
The morning consisted of three mini workshops, all of which were led by PGCE Geography students, under the watchful and expert guidance of Georgia Ramsay and Dr Adrian Gonzalez, the workshops had been meticulously planned to challenge and engage pupils in arguably one of the most relevant topics of their generation. As the world's future leaders, we wanted to create workshops that pushed pupils' thinking beyond small scale changes, but instead get them to think of transformational change that will transform urban areas in particular, for the better.

The workshops were on sustainable housing and transport, water, food, energy and waste and lastly sustainable employment. I led, alongside another PGCE student the workshop on sustainable employment, where pupils were tasked with building a sustainable tourist business based here in York. Pupils on the whole enjoyed the workshop with many stating that the workshop had changed their perception on what makes a job 'sustainable'.



After a successful morning of workshops and some pizza to help keep spirits high, the baton was handed over to the pupils in the afternoon. Channelling their inner Gaudi, pupils were tasked with utilising all the information they had learnt in the morning to transform Guildhall ward into a sustainable urban area. With ideas beyond their years, pupils came up with some innovative solutions to some of the most pressing issues of the modern day. Ideas included, boat taxis, 'green employees', urban greening and many more.

Often presented in media as an entirely doomed scenario, I found the interest and engagement each pupil showed in learning about sustainability and what and why it is needed, a real glimmer of hope for the future. So, as I embark on my career in the world of education and will hopefully inspire many more pupils to take in and value the world each has around them, I will take with me fond memories of an overwhelming, inspiring and hopeful day.



## REFLECTIONS ON MY PGCE BY LIAM MCCREESH, PGCE GEOGRAPHY

If you told me after my graduation in 2013; that I would return to university once again, I would have laughed in your face. But that is what happened. I had reached a crossroads in my life and training to teach was the route that called out to me most.

Navigating an unfamiliar campus and a modern, more technological way of working was a steep learning curve for me. I rose to the challenge; experimenting with apps, embedding videos into my PowerPoint presentations and adding memes to worksheets to signal my hilarious personality. I did everything except set up a TikTok account, baby steps first.

There are two 'hats', the student hat and the teacher hat. Throughout the PGCE course, you feel as if you are switching between the two constantly; Assignment Two, Hurricane Katrina Lesson Plan, WSI, Review 2, Global Atmospheric Circulation Worksheet. To and fro, on and off, here and there. Eventually you get the hang of this lark and slowly you begin to realise that these two 'hats' were the same hat all along. Teaching is a continuous process of self-improvement whereby you are both Master and Padawan.

For lack of a better funfair ride, a PGCE is a rollercoaster. With highs, lows and the odd scream. Blink and you'd miss it. Life in the fast lane: 10 months in and out. Feels like more and feels like less at the same time. The hard days are easily left behind when your focus is always in front, where your students are sitting.

Embarking on this PGCE has been one of the boldest yet best decisions I've made. I sometimes wish that I had trained to teach sooner, but to have the support I've received from my university tutors, school placement mentors, colleagues and my fellow trainees – I'd say my timing was just right.

## FOCUSSING ON EAL

BY EMMA HOLMES, PGCE CHEMISTRY

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the PGCE course, and one of the most memorable highlights occurred during my Placement 2. During this placement, I encountered a particularly challenging yet rewarding situation involving a new student in my Year 7 class who spoke very limited English. Initially, my host teacher and I attempted to use Google Translate to identify the specific Chinese dialect the student spoke, but our efforts were inconclusive. Fortunately, another student in the class who spoke Mandarin was able to communicate with the new student, which provided a temporary solution.

Determined to provide the best support possible, I decided to research effective strategies for teaching English as an Additional Language (EAL) students. I discovered several articles recommending the use of dual coding, which involves presenting information in both the student's native language and in English. Implementing this strategy was straightforward using the translation feature in PowerPoint. By creating bilingual presentations, I was able to facilitate better understanding for the student.

Over time, I expanded this approach by translating glossaries and key vocabulary within English worksheets, enabling the student to grasp essential concepts. Additionally, I made a point of modelling answers extensively on the board, which helped the student correct their work and demonstrate continuous progress.

By the end of my Placement 2, the student had made significant strides in understanding and engaging with the material. This experience not only highlighted the importance of adaptive teaching strategies but also reinforced my commitment to supporting all students, regardless of their language proficiency.

PROFESSIONAL ENRICHMENT AT APPLEFIELDS  
SPECIAL SCHOOL  
BY JACK LORD, PGCE HISTORY

'In my second week of Professional Enrichment, I spent time at Applefields and their satellite schools. It was a unique and fantastic opportunity. I saw how the lessons were highly differentiated, with practically each student having a unique task. While they would all be doing Maths, each would be one with a task that was challenging and pushing them to improve. My time there was very fruitful. Expectations for the students, for the teachers, and for each lesson were critical. Deviation resulted in students losing focus or disassociating from the lesson completely. The staff were clearly zeroed in on the importance of this and it has informed my understanding of it. The clear and well-understood expectations allowed each student to prepare well for each task, and aided the staff in helping the students to excel.

On this, much effort was made to allow students to move gently between lessons/topics. I do not mean physically. The transition between lessons (time to re-engage or to get up for those more tactile learners) was something that has inspired me to try to identify students who may need a minute of either a supportive task (handing out glues/sheets) or some re-focus time (doodling on a scrap paper, reading, or time outside the class). This will be something I need to think about.

The time at Applefields has significantly helped my understanding of teaching, especially in making my lessons accessible to all students, and I can not recommend enough that all teachers spend some time with the wonderful staff of Applefields.'



BY ANGELA CURTIS, PGCE BIOLOGY

During my week-long professional enrichment, I chose to go to Applefields School in York and its satellite locations at Manor School and Millthorpe School. The experience was hugely enjoyable and beneficial for my understanding of SEND. From the outset, Adam and his team were very supportive and friendly, which made me feel welcome and comfortable.

For three days, I was based at the main site of Applefields School, working with a class of students with severe learning difficulties. I was involved in lessons, helping and interacting with students throughout the day, during break times, and at lunchtimes. This setting allowed me to see the specialized teaching methods and care practices designed to meet the students' unique needs. I was very impressed by the staff's patience, empathy, and expertise, and I felt fortunate to contribute to such a positive educational environment.

Two days of my placement involved being at the satellite locations: Manor School and Millthorpe School. These experiences provided useful insights into how Applefields supports students in different settings. At both satellite locations, I observed how Applefields' programs are integrated within a mainstream school context. Once again, I was actively involved in the lessons and the students' daily routine at both schools. Overall, my week at Applefields and its satellite sites was an invaluable experience that I would recommend to anyone interested in learning how an alternative provision school works and what Applefields is like. I am very grateful to Adam and all the staff for their support and kindness throughout my placement.

BY JACK NEILL, PGCE MFL

I spent the majority of the week with an enhanced provision class at Applefields supporting the team with a variety of activities. This ranged from some literacy and numeracy to visiting a farm with some pupils to learn about and feed the animals, and to develop important communication and social skills. It was fantastic to see the children in a different environment and to see them gaining some invaluable experiences.

I also spent two days at Applefields' Satellite locations at Millthorpe School and Manor School. These sites are designed to integrate pupils into a mainstream setting. Some pupils will attend mainstream maths and English classes and they receive specialist teaching in their Satellite classes. Pupils also have the opportunity to use the school's facilities such as Food Technology rooms, the sports facilities, and are involved in whole school initiatives. On Thursday we spent the afternoon at Homestead Park having a picnic and playing a variety of sports which fitted with the current theme of the Olympics. The pupils had a very enjoyable time and were even treated to an ice cream!

Spending time at Applefields has really enriched my York PGCE experience and supported me in developing my teaching skills and ideas further which will benefit me in the classroom. I feel prepared to support all pupils in the classroom and I am really grateful to the team at Applefields for supporting me on this placement and for designing this amazing opportunity.





## MY PGCE JOURNEY

BY KIMBERLY MASHAYAMOMBE, PGCE HISTORY

My PGCE experience equipped me with the resilience and determination necessary for my first role as an Early Career Teacher (ECT). The course gradually introduced me to the complexities of daily teaching, providing a solid foundation in lesson planning, behaviour management, collaboration within school systems and departments, and much more. Although I had a strong desire to pursue secondary teaching after my undergraduate studies, I underestimated the intensity of the course. Nevertheless, with the unwavering support of my tutors and mentors, I persevered and achieved my goal of becoming a qualified teacher.

The University of York PGCE course offered numerous opportunities to enhance my teacher training through effective seminars and active group discussions. By the end of the course, I had established strong subject connections with colleagues and local schools, which has left me feeling well-prepared to embark on my teaching career and continue engaging with the teaching community. School mentors were conscientious and willing to dedicate their time in training us to be the best educators we could be.

In both my placement schools, I was able to express any worries or concerns, and my mentors addressed them with understanding and support. Having mentors who comprehended how daunting and overwhelming the nature of the PGCE was made the experience much more manageable. The experienced subject and WSI tutors genuinely cared about our well-being and development as future teachers, truly taking us under their wing.



## MY PGCE JOURNEY BY TRYSTAN RATCLIFFE, PGCE ENGLISH

When I found out my first placement school, my heart sank into my shoes.

It was rated Outstanding by the O-words, and looked lovely from a Google search. But I didn't know anyone! None of the almost-friends I'd made in the first few days were placed there with me. This, I decided, was going to be a drag. I was going to have to lean into quiet evenings with my spidery notes on pedagogy, overflowing Word docs, and late-stage Taylor Swift, make my bars of choice YorSearch and Dairy Milk.

The next day, I sat next to the English trainee I'd been placed alongside, and he remarked that we could never be friends – we were in direct competition.

Weeks passed and I spent less time than I'd expected on my laptop, and more in the staff room at lunch, and over Friday fish and chips, ranking the Monster Munch monsters with the Physics teacher-to-be, practising Simpsons impressions with the History trainees, and discussing the Core Content framework – what else? – with my fellow English ITT student.

When I began my second placement, I was blessed by the company of a History trainee from my first school, someone who, months prior, had been a total stranger. While we waited for our lift home, we'd air our struggles and brainstorm solutions, mope a little and laugh more, and discuss outfit ideas for the Eras tour. Over what was, at times, a challenging placement, we supported each other through every step.

Looking for my first post, I was lucky enough to land an interview at the perfect school. I felt pretty confident until I heard that my fellow English trainee from our first placement was interviewing there, too – not only would I be pitted against a friend, but someone I knew was brilliant! Never were his first words to me more true: we were in direct competition.

But on the morning came a surprise: while only one post had been advertised, the school was interviewing for two. The thought flitted across my mind – it would be nice if...

I caught that thought mid-flight, caged it.

The day went well, despite the facts that the class were convinced that a poem from the ninth century was about Henry VIII, the student panel were treated to my riveting accounts of selling lightbulbs and emulsion in a homeware store in North-East Wales, and a governess caught me off-guard with a question about the last book I'd read; as I hopped off the train at York, I got a call and a job offer.

And though they couldn't tell me, then, who they were about to offer the other job to, the headteacher assured me that I'd be very happy with their decision.

I was.

So, long after the CCFs and ever-wise words of Dylan Wiliam have faded from the recesses of my mind, I'm sure that the friends I have made this year, and the invaluable support they have given me, will remain, like QTS, with me.



## NUGGETS OF ADVICE

BY JAMES KEWLEY, PGCE MATHS

I remember sitting in the full lecture theatre back at the start of September, along with a hundred or so people, excited but unsure about what the next ten months would bring. The two things I knew were that I would be teaching a lot of Maths and I would need to work really hard.

I've had the privilege of working with two amazing departments during my PGCE year, at Selby High School and All Saints. Nothing has ever been too much trouble for my mentors and host teachers in supporting me through my development, and for that I must express my gratitude to all involved. But the people who I have learnt the most from are the pupils (I've taught about 400 of them this year alone!). I might have learnt as much from them as they have from me, whether that be how to deal with disruptive behaviour, understanding their misconceptions around why we 'borrow one from next door', or even that I have changed a pupil's attitudes towards Maths for the better.

If I were to offer a nugget of advice to future ITTs, it would be to pounce on every opportunity that comes up. This is the time to try things out, help out at clubs, make phone calls home, and deliver a slightly wacky lesson... and not just because it looks good on PebblePad! The amount of support I had received enabled me to do all of these things (and more!), and then crucially get invaluable feedback which will inform my future practice. I've gained so many ideas from successful lessons which I am looking forward to using again. My favourite three lessons this year involved:

- Counting smarties to compare experimental and theoretical probabilities,
- Thinking back to the pandemic and using social distancing to understand loci,
- Linking statistics to cultural capital by matching Olympic track and field events to scatter graphs of the Olympic records over time.

The University and both of my placement schools have given me such a firm foundation in my teaching practice but I know that this is just the start. I was correct that I would be teaching a lot of Maths and I would need to work really hard, but my PGCE year was so much more than I had first imagined. Put simply, it's been the most rewarding year of my life so far. I am so pleased to have embarked on this career path as a Maths Teacher and I am so excited about the career ahead of me.



## REFLECTING ON MY PGCE YEAR BY MABLE NLLEYA, PGCE MATHS

The year has been a mixture of challenges, hard work, learning, success, and fulfilment.

We were told by those before us and by the tutors that the PGCE would be one of the most challenging things we have ever done. They were right; I must say they were too right! I thought surely, as a mature student, I have had different life experiences that I can declare challenging. However, I then found out that the PGCE's challenges are not usual because they accelerate the journey to self-discovery. We know many self-help books and self-discovery courses because self-discovery is not easy to learn, no matter how old you are. Consequently, one of the most challenging things about the PGCE was that one had to self-discover under expert scrutiny. The experts are your mentors, host teachers, specialist colleagues, and the people we all signed up for the students.

Despite the challenges, you begin with a goal and a voice that says, "It can't be that bad". Instead of flight, you fight. You put in the work every day, every hour, and every minute. Friday becomes like the 31st of December, a massive celebration of achievements and failures, reflections, and just the fact that you made it. You look back week in and week out and smile because, above it all, you're putting in the work that, in your heart of hearts, nothing has ever prepared you for this. So, the hard work becomes a weekly trophy.



You start out very open to learning the big things until you stop and realise that even the small things are important to learn. For example, when cutting paper using a guillotine, you've got to commit; otherwise, it will not be straight. So, when the wins and losses begin to overwhelm you, you remember the guillotine. You've committed to this because you believe you're appointed to make a difference, and you will do what it takes to learn every little thing and every big thing. Finally, you realise a learning spirit is all it takes. Learning about yourself, how you respond to feedback, how you give other people give you back and learning about the power of good intentions. Learning about the people around me, like colleagues and remembering that comparison is a thief of joy. This is because one day, they have a good day, and the other day, they have the same bad day you had the other day. You learn to embrace mistakes and learn to take a moment to bask in your successes. The PGCE has been a journey of celebrating learning and growth.

What are the successes? There are many fulfilling successes, including walking in your purpose of making a difference. Other successes include the very first time your host teacher says, 'Oh wow, that was a good lesson.' When you connect with the pupil with behaviours that challenge. When the students say, 'She or he is my favourite teacher.' The comfort the end-of-term reviews bring, the assurance at every stage of the PGCE. The visits from the subject mentors are meant to be daunting, but I assure you, those felt like my greatest moments of success. The relief of their visits gives a statement, "Finally, someone who has known me from the beginning believes in me, even when I don't". These moments of recognition and success are the fuel that keeps you going.

Finally, the fulfilment comes right at the end before the last assignment (we will not talk about assignments), and enrichment week; you finally feel like a teacher. You've done assessments, finally know why you chose the job, and finally discovered yourself as a teacher.

Then you stop and realise self-discovery is a lifelong journey that gets easier when you have a teachable spirit. At this point, you remember the guillotine again and commit to starting your ECT years.

This has been a journey that has left me grateful and believing in humanity more than I have ever done. When I looked into the children's eyes, I found myself believing in the future. Remembering the support I have received, reminded me that there is kindness in this world. So, whatever your background, if you have done this course, well done to us and well done to those who will commit to joining us on this journey.





# The 2024/25 PGCE cohort

EMBRACING THE CHALLENGE

BY LYDIA NOBLE, ENGLISH

During my time studying an 'Education' degree, I was commonly asked, by friends and family, if this meant teaching was definitely on the cards. However, many, if not most, of my fellow 'Education' graduates are not going into teaching (yet). After having a glimpse of the theoretical world of education, during my undergraduate degree, I am now especially motivated to understand education 'behind the scenes', in particular the tensions and practicalities which teachers must navigate every day in school.

I must admit, I had a few small worries about joining next year's PGCE programme. For one thing, I have not studied my chosen subject, English, at degree level, so I was worried that this could put me at a slight disadvantage. Also, I realise that the PGCE will challenge me in very different ways compared to my degree; I am moving from an environment which particularly values reading and academic writing, to an environment where organisation, confidence and other practical skills are especially crucial. However, I am extremely excited for the challenge! I have been assured by staff running the PGCE programme, as well as teachers from my old secondary school in York, that we will be extremely well supported by mentors and academic tutors, which has helped to ease any worries. I am looking forward to being pushed out of my comfort zone, whilst at the same time enjoying the process and meeting lots of new people, this upcoming year!

## A NEW CHAPTER

BY JAMES LITTLEFIELD, GEOGRAPHY

In September I will begin my PGCE in Geography, and I cannot wait to get started. Teaching is a career that appeals to me because of the gratification achieved through it. To support pupils and see the growth in their confidence and academic ability is the aspect of teaching I most look forward to. Especially in the subject area of Geography, something that I am very passionate about. It is pertinent that pupils have a critical understanding of Geographical theories and concepts, such as Climate Change, to ensure the best and most sustainable future for the environment. Given this, I feel that teaching is the career in which I could make a difference in trying to help pupils achieve the best that they can, which for me is an irreplaceable and rewarding feeling.

Whilst I am excited to undertake the PGCE, I am not underestimating it. I do not expect it to feel like my undergraduate degree, but I feel ready for any challenges ahead. Being on placement is the part of the course I look forward to the most, as I am eager to get hands-on experience in the classroom and am ready for a change from purely assignment-based student life. Experience is a necessity for finding the teaching methods that work for me, and I am keen to learn from other teachers and reflect on my own lessons. Overall, I am very excited to get my PGCE started, and I do not believe that I could find a career path that would better suit myself.

## RIPPLES

BY KATHERINE ROBERTS, ENGLISH

Having wanted to teach for as long as I can remember, it was in year 7 when my passion for teaching English was ignited by an inspirational teacher. Through her enthusiasm and creativity, she showed me not only the power words can have to transcend time and cross cultures, creating pathways that enable a reader to meet new people and discover new worlds, but also how one teacher can cause ripples, like a stone dropped into a lake, that keep spreading long after the stone has disappeared.

During my BA English/Linguistics at the University of York, I took part in the York Students in Schools scheme, which quickly became the highlight of my week, and confirmed that I wanted to follow in my English teacher's footsteps, and perhaps even cause some ripples of my own!

While there is a lot that is unknown about the path ahead, I am filled with excitement about the coming year. I am excited to grow, overcoming challenges and being pushed beyond my comfort zone. I am excited to share the subject I love, and the power it has to inspire, influence, motivate, unite and create change - a power that every person should be able to access and harness, to help them reach their potential. Most of all, however, I am excited to be in a classroom, learning from my mentors, peers and all the students I will meet. The PGCE is the beginning of my journey to becoming a teacher, and I cannot wait to get started! It is time to dip my toe in the water and hope some ripples spread...

# PGCE Alumni

HOW THE PGCE HELPED ME TO  
PREPARE FOR MY ECT TRANSITION  
BY DAVID TURNER, 2022-23 HISTORY COHORT

It's been a year now since I waved goodbye to the PGCE. We spent the final day running around York on a History trail in the blazing sun and ended the day hiring out a room in the Judge's Lodging celebrating a wonderful year of meeting new people and making memories for a lifetime.



We all absolutely loved our training year and this final day was a fitting end to such an amazing year. Not only did we make friends and have plenty of fun throughout the year, but we also felt cause for celebration because we genuinely felt ready and excited for the year to come. We'd seen ourselves grow from true novices to confident, blossoming teachers. How on earth did we manage this? The main reason: a hell of a lot of support from people who genuinely wanted the best for us.

From the moment I stepped into the PGCE, fresh out of uni and with no experience of teaching whatsoever, I felt like the people around me had my best interests in mind. The structure of the course really helped those of us who had limited experience in schools before, as it grounded us in theory and very gradually introduced us into the practical side. Whole School seminars gave us such a strong foundation in things like behaviour management, how the brain works and the psychology of how learning takes place. This fed directly into the subject specific sessions where the 'real magic happens'.

Wrestling with the latest thinking around History teaching, and interacting with people on the cutting edge of History was invaluable for developing our skills as History teachers. It's something I have definitely felt in my ECT year that graduates of the University of York have been particularly strong in bringing the latest History research to our new departments, and this is all down to the strength of the curriculum area side of the PGCE.

So when we all gathered this time last year on our final day of the PGCE we genuinely felt like we were competent and ready for our ECT years. The turnout for the Judge's lodging at the end was incredible and therein lies the true preparation for the ECT year. We have made an amazing network of teachers, all at the same stage in our careers, and we all keep in regular contact supporting each other through the early stages of our teaching careers. We all feel incredibly lucky that we learned all of this at the University of York PGCE.



MY FIRST YEAR AS AN ECT  
BY TORI ALLEN, 2022-23 HISTORY COHORT

There is no one word to summarise your first year as an ECT, but having come to the end of my first year as a qualified teacher I am going to pick the word “whirlwind” as my singular adjective to describe the last 10 months. The transition from PGCE to ECT is not easy, with many new responsibilities, the new role of the form tutor, new technology to deal with, new printers to learn how to fix and new departments to work with, all placed upon you.



That is without even mentioning teaching your subject! However, the hard work done during the PGCE year made my first year of teaching even more enjoyable and rewarding than the PGCE. The hours are tough as you launch into your 90% teacher timetable, and the adjustment from having somebody watching you in every minute of your teaching to only having another adult in the room if there is an emergency (excluding classes with wonderful TAs or scheduled observations) is challenging, especially at the start. However, having now reached the end of the summer term I feel proud of the year I have had and grateful for the support I have received not only from my department and mentor at my fantastic school, but also due to the continued links with the University of York PGCE team.



During the academic year I have stayed in contact with my History CA tutors, Ruth and Helen, where I have been able to ask for advice but also stay engaged with all things history pedagogy, helping me to continue to develop as an early career history teacher beyond the provision of my ECT induction training. The community of ECTs and support network built during the PGCE has not ended with the QTS certificate. In addition, this year I successfully applied for a new teaching job for the coming academic year at my first placement school, Queen Ethelburga's, during which process I was able to reach out to the PGCE team and ask for advice on my application due to their extensive knowledge on their partnership schools. Having had such a positive experience on placement at QE I could not pass up the opportunity to work at the school as a now qualified teacher. This positive experience was made as such by the fantastic support I received from my PGCE mentor, Helen, whilst on placement, as well as the communication and guidance between the school and university during my training.

Your first year as an ECT is special: you get your own classes, produce your own exam and test results, are likely in charge of your own form who may even carry your initials (mine were a gorgeous year 7 form whom I will miss when I change schools)! So, whilst it is difficult, and there is A LOT to think about, it is worth the hard work. The rewards you get from teaching the subject you love, attempting to inspire young minds even on the darkest of January days, are made worthwhile by seeing pupil progress, achieving your personal ECT targets, and by the laughs with colleagues over yet another cup of coffee.

# THE NEW PRIMARY PGCE

BY EMMA CLARKE, PRIMARY PGCE LEAD



Having been a primary school teacher for almost twenty years, with the bulk of those spent teaching in and around York, it was with great pride that I took up the role of programme leader for the primary PGCE at the start of this year. Although I have worked in university-led Initial Teacher Education for coming up to ten years I have spent the last six months in the incredibly envious position of planning a programme from scratch. This has been a fantastic opportunity – but definitely overwhelming at times!

The last six months have allowed me to really think carefully about what primary education is, and what makes an outstanding primary teacher. Trying to distil that into a nine-month programme has been challenging and exciting in equal measure. Talking to primary colleagues around England about what makes their PGCE programmes special and working with school-based and wider university colleagues has been rewarding and thought provoking. The primary PGCE has also begun at an opportune moment, allowing me to plan for all of the upcoming changes from the Department of Education and the new Quality Requirements which have given me a clear structure to work up from.



The first iteration of the primary PGCE next year has been designed closely with my fantastic primary colleagues from the Pathfinder Teaching School Hub who have managed to be central to the programme formation whilst simultaneously running two schools, which is no mean feat. The programme will begin with a very exciting mix of successful applicants who are largely either University of York undergraduates or people who have either worked or volunteered in some capacity in Pathfinder schools which promises to bring a diversity of views, ideas and experiences to our sessions which will enrich our discussions and allow all of us to learn something from each other.

The central aims of the University of York primary PGCE are to; support beginning teachers to be adaptable and adaptive, to be research informed, research literate and critical, and to become outstanding professionals who enrich schools and are driven to make a difference to pupils, families, colleagues and the wider profession. I am very excited to see how these aims come to life with our inaugural primary PGCE cohort and share the challenges and successes of learning to teach with them, my University-based and school-based colleagues.



# Celebrating York Students in Schools

1994 to 2024 and beyond

BY LEANNE SHAW

YSIS VOLUNTEERING PROJECT OFFICER

Since 1994, York Students in Schools (YSIS) has connected 14,000 student volunteers with over 60 local schools and nurseries to help raise aspirations and attainment of pupils in York. Our volunteering opportunities are designed to provide additional support to schools and nursery settings, whilst enabling our student volunteers to be role models and build their own mentoring skills and confidence.

To commemorate our 30th Anniversary in 2024, our webpage ([bit.ly/ysis-30](https://bit.ly/ysis-30)) features a timeline showcasing our key achievements over the years. We also invite you to share your Memories of YSIS if you or your colleagues have completed a YSIS placement or hosted a memorable volunteer at your school.

This academic year, we placed 360 volunteers into 48 schools and nurseries across York. Mrs Carr from Lord Deramore's Primary School commented "All our volunteers have been helpful, reliable and showed great skills both in following instructions and using their initiative. All staff who had a student in their classes have been extremely positive". Students completed a range of placement types, including Classroom Assistant, Speech and Language Assistant (supporting the Early Talk for York WellComm Screening) and GCSE English and Maths tutoring.

In 2024, we delivered the Girls: Enrichment and Motivation for Success (GEMS) project, in which our student volunteers worked with girls at Millthorpe School who were not engaging fully in their education. They provided confidence boosting workshops, a campus visit and worked with them to organise a charity bake sale, where the girls raised £115 for charity. The girls involved shared that they enjoyed meeting new people, appreciated having something to look forward to each week, and felt proud of the significant amount of money they raised through completing the project.

Working with all 6 South Bank MAT schools, we supported their Transition Support Mentoring programme in the Summer Term, allowing 23 of our volunteers to meet weekly with pupils who were likely to find the academic transition to Year 7 or Year 10 challenging).

On the 4th June we hosted an insightful and engaging York Festival of Ideas panel discussion entitled “Unpacking Mental Health Challenges in Schools” with speakers including Rod Sims (Headteacher at York High School) and Pete Crane (Manager at The Joseph Trust Alternative Provision). The recording of this session is available from the York Festival of Ideas YouTube channel.

We are incredibly grateful for the invaluable support of the PGCE Team at York, who play a vital role in our programme by equipping volunteers with essential knowledge and skills through our GCSE Tutoring, Block Placement and YSIS Plus training.

If you would like any further information or wish to get involved, please contact [ysis@york.ac.uk](mailto:ysis@york.ac.uk). We want to take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers, as well as the schools and nurseries YSIS supports, for their dedication and collaboration.



# The Place

The Place is an innovative and dynamic community learning centre based in the heart of the Chapelfields estate which opened its doors in October 2023. It is a collaboration between the University of York, York High School, Westfield Primary Community School, local employers and the local community. Our collective vision is to provide a safe space for children and young people to learn and grow and for adults to connect, access support and take part in lifelong learning or training.

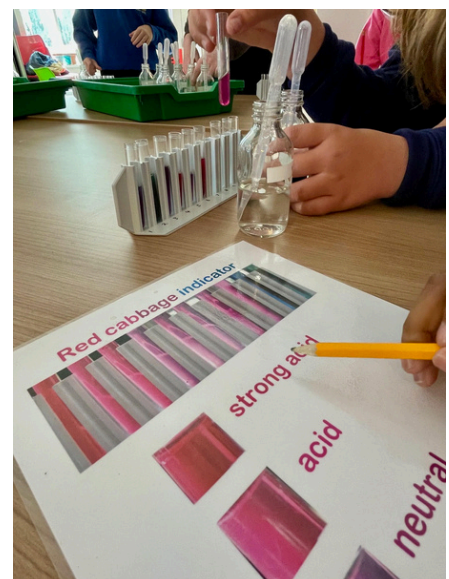
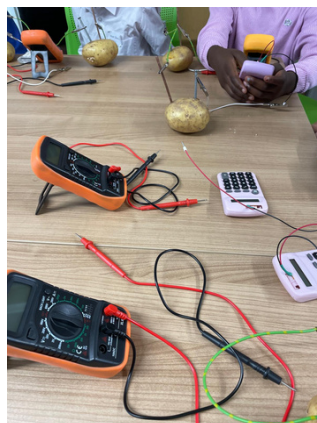


The location was chosen as it is a particularly underserved part of York. York is one of just six local authorities in the country in which, at the end of primary school, disadvantaged pupils are over a year behind more advantaged pupils. The gap in progression to higher education between poorer York school children and their more affluent peers is one of the widest in the country. These communities are often overlooked by national charities and government initiatives looking only to support areas with the greatest need on the greatest scale. As a result, many families are caught in a 'double disadvantage', creating neighbourhoods where for decades, poverty and educational underachievement have unfairly gone hand in hand. Westfield and Chapelfields are among six wards in York which sit with the greatest levels of disadvantage in the country, despite York's overall reputation for comparative affluence.

The centre provides an inspiring space for young people and their families to make their own, with a programme including academic and employability support, plus extracurricular activities to help narrow the significant attainment gap in the area and to empower the community to realise their ambitions.

Our after-school clubs draw in delivery from a huge variety of York's academic departments, leading sessions as diverse as bubble science, robotics and archaeology while bespoke school-time interventions are able to tailor support to bespoke cohorts of young people. This can include those missing out on school through emotionally-based school avoidance, Year 6 students struggling with SATs, wellbeing or the transition to secondary school, and also provide employability skills and experience from Year 3 all the way through to school leavers.

With a small core team employed by University of York, our impact and reach is greatly enhanced by collaborating with York Cares, major cultural venues, the vibrant employer network of York (several of whom donate funding, resource and volunteer hours) and other Higher Education institutions including YSJ and Askham Bryan College. Through the support of the wider York A&O team as well as departmental outreach teams we are able to encourage attainment, ambition, learning, wellbeing and resilience in our young people membership.



Our carefully evaluated annual programme includes a tailored week every term for the whole of Westfield's Year 6 each week covering the core curriculum elements of English, maths and science. These weeks include campus visits - the experience and excitement of a student canteen should not be under-estimated!

This term, Science week (in the words of the staff at Westfield Community Primary School) saw the children: land an egg on Mars, create a moving robot, hold a meteor, survey nature in a hedge, extract DNA from strawberries, test acids and alkalis in test-tubes, make slime, learn about evolution of animals, visit a working farm, make a kookaburra laugh, watch kit-kats being made, be a design engineer and programme a computer...!

By providing role models at all our sessions in the form of student ambassadors, we are really able to give children a vision of what their post-school outcomes could include. Just recently we have been delighted to host students on placement and enrichment programmes, including from the Department of Education. We would love to grow these opportunities for students to work alongside children as they learn new ways to thrive, and explore opportunity and learning.

The Place is philanthropically funded through incredibly generous individual and corporate donors and this allows us to bring children along to gain skills, grow their own personal networks of people and ideas, and raise their ambition along with their attainment.

As we build-up to a busy summer of activity including Lunch-Labs, cultural-horizon day trips and arts workshops we'd love to hear from anyone who wants to learn more about what we do.

The Place - a community together.

Instagram: @theplaceyork  
Facebook: The Place - York



We would like to thank all colleagues across our Partnership for their continued support and ongoing commitment to the development of our future teachers.

We would also like to thank all our guest speakers and presenters who have helped to make the PGCE such a rich experience.

Finally, a big thank you to all those who contribute to our extensive interviewing programme.

Without all these colleagues we would not have such a collegiate and collaborative Partnership.



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