

Department of Education

# PGCE English Mentors’ Meeting (In person & via Zoom)

# 29th June 2023 14:00 - 16:00

# MINUTES

## Welcome, apologies & introductions

Present at the meeting in person were: Katherine Oddy (English Mentor at Queen Ethelburga’s Collegiate); Jenny Kilmartin (English Mentor at All Saints School, York); Nicola Towle (PGCE English Tutor) and Catherine Shawyer (PGCE English Course Leader). Also present via Zoom were Lee Carter (English Mentor at Fulford School), Rachel Fieldhouse (English Mentor Outwood Academy Freeston) and Naomi Welsh (English Mentor at All Saints School, York).

Unfortunately the majority of colleagues were unable to attend the meeting either in person or via Zoom. Apologies were received as follows:

Alix Blaikie, Airedale Academy

Charlotte Carson, Tadcaster Grammar School

Kate Cockle, Archbishop Holgate’s School

Mel Cockshutt, Brayton Academy

Matt Gadd, George Pindar School

Faye Galtrey, Kettlethorpe High School

Jane Humphreys, Vale of York academy

Ruth Johnson, St John Fisher, School

Ed Kisby, Selby High School

Vicky Marshall, Google Academy

Izzy Terry, Huntington School

Emily Vizard, The Joseph Rowntree School

Lucy Waines, Archbishop Holgate’s School

Most mentors who were unable to participate, said that they would listen/watch a recorded version of the training so CS has created one and this will be sent out along with these Minutes and a copy of the slides and other resources used in the meeting.

N.B. Although CS and NT fully appreciate the pressures school colleagues are under, there is a DfE expectation in future that mentors will engage even more with ITT training opportunities, some of which will be face to face. This enhanced focus on mentoring will be part of national requirements from September 2024. Regardless of what the government may be prescribing, CSHhand NT believe that it is valuable for mentors to meet and work together as a group in meetings/training so in-person training will continue to be the preferred mode of delivery in the coming academic year.

## Review of & reflections on 2022-23

Slide 3: English enjoyed a 100% completion rate (17 trainees) this academic year. This is an outstanding achievement in the current challenging climate, particularly in the absence of any Government funded training bursary for English. Thank you to mentors for contributing towards this success.

Slide 4: 14 of 17 trainees are going into teaching straight away. The remainder are planning to enter teaching in England after one or two years of travel/teaching abroad. CS reminded mentors that finances have been very tight for trainees this year so if they have ny ECTs starting in school in September they may find it very helpful if they could receive some of their September salary part way through the month rather than at the very end of it.

Slide5: CS described the in-year changes to our programme:

* **Supporting and challenging EAL pupils**

This has always been a difficult area to address and whatever we have tried, trainee feedback has not been as high as we would like. Often it is the case that trainees do not have much opportunity to apply this aspect of their training when on placement simply because they do not come across many pupils who have EAL. This year, instead of a specific university session in the English programme on EAL, trainees were asked to re-visit the excellent WSI materials they had been in receipt of in the Autumn Term. They were given pen portraits of various EAL pupils and tasked with choosing a lesson they had taught in Placement 1 and adapting it to include the pupil whose pen portrait they had chosen. Trainees then sampled each other’s work in the shared folder. Although we haven’t seen the end of year feedback from trainees as yet, this seemed a more effective approach than yet another CA session as it consolidated prior learning and felt closer to the idea of trainees applying their learning.

* **Post-16 Lang and Lit**

Instead of the two self-study options we have used in the past three years which trainees, particularly those who know they will be working in an 11-16 school, might have completely opted out of in favour of other possibilities which they may perceive as of greater priority, we dedicated a day of the Summer programme this year to post-16 teaching and launched it with an online training session which then led into the self study modules. Trainees could work on either A’ level Literature or A’ level Language or indeed could access both.

* **Creativity in English Teaching**

CS and NT are finding an increasing requirement in school English Departments for teachers, including trainees, to use centrally designed PowerPoints and other resources where the teacher is the expert at the front of the room imparting knowledge. Towards the end of the programme we wanted trainees to try out alternative pedagogic strategies some of which were introduced earlier in the programme (e.g. using small group discussion; hot seating; soundscapes; freezeframes; reading as a writer/writing as a reader; etc). As part of this focus on creativity, trainees visited Shandy Hall and the National Railway Museum looking at non-linear texts, learning beyond the classroom and writing poetry. Some of this work was stimulated by two recent journal articles that will be circulated along with these Minutes and which may be of interest for mentors and English Departments in schools to read.

Slide 7: Lastly in summing up this very successful year, CS shared a newsletter article written by one of the English trainees reflecting on the wealth of personal and professional learning they had experienced. These sentiments are echoed by all the 2022-23 English cohort. CS and NT repeated their thanks to all mentors, host teachers and other school colleagues. We really appreciate all that you do and despite the busy-ness and general pressure in school, we hope you feel pleased and proud about how you are contributing to the training of the next generation of English teachers.

## ITaP

Using the slides under Item 3 (Slides 9-13), CS explained the ITaP pilot which we would be running this coming year in preparation for the new course which is being developed for the following year in line with government reaccreditation requirements. From September 2024 the course will feature 4 ITaP weeks. These are compulsory elements of ITT training in future.

Katherine Oddy observed that she could see the benefit of trainees focusing intensively on an aspect of training, but she said she was concerned about the lack of flexibility and the fact that ITaPs would be unlikely to fit with a trainee’s individual development targets.

In response to a question from Lee Carter, CS clarified that there would be no formal assessment of the ITaP theme, beyond focused observations conducted by mentors/host teachers and trainees’ reflections on PebblePad.

CS indicated that a more detailed focus on ITaP would feature in the Autumn English mentor training. The date of this meeting is 6th October 2.30-4.30pm.

## Ofsted

Mentors were advised that our Partnership will definitely have an Ofsted inspection next year as all providers must be inspected under the current framework which expires at the end of the next academic year. Any Ofsted inspection will be between January – June 2024. CS included a link on Slide 14 to the current Ofsted framework for ITE and briefly introduced some reminders (Slides 15 & 16) with key points highlighted.

Jenny Kilmartin said she had found the trainee bulletin really useful in focusing topics of training conversations with trainees. Jenny suggested that next year weekly reminders specifically for English mentors might be helpful. CS will send out the university curriculum overview again to mentors at the start of the next academic year and will also send out brief weekly bulletins reminding mentors which aspects of English trainees have focused on in a particular week in taught university sessions.

## An Ideal KS3 English Curriculum

CS explained a plenary group task English trainees had been set this year and last in the final week of the course. As well as being a useful plenary for the year for trainees, CSh and NT thought it might be a valuable resource for school English Departments to provide ideas around texts and topics for new units of work. There is a link on Slide 17 to a Google folder which mentors can access and share with their school colleagues if they would like to do so. Included also in the folder is a copy of the resource last year’s English trainees made of reviews of texts by writers of colour.

## Recruitment

Slide 18: In a very challenging climate nationally for teacher recruitment, the UoY PGCE programme is doing well overall and in comparison with numbers on the course this time last year.

For English we have met our recruitment target and will have a group of 25 next year compared with 17 this year. Applications for English PGCE next year are now closed. If English Departments are able to host more than one trainee per placement this coming year, please do get in touch.

## A.O.B.

CS asked how mentors used the Barbara Bleiman book that she had lent to all English mentors. In this first year of suggesting reading, CS has resisted identifying specific chapters for trainee mentor meetings. Lee Carter would quite like reading to be prescribed as this would be more manageable than selecting extracts from a whole book. Jenny Kilmartin really liked the book, although the chapter on group work had raised some questions for her.

English Mentor Meetings will be termly in future in line with government requirements. Dates of meetings next year for your diaries and to help with early requests for cover are:

Friday 6th October 2023, 2.30-4.30pm

Friday 2nd February 2024, 2.30-4.30pm

Thursday 4th July 2024, 2-4pm

The English PGCE mentor meeting finished at 15:29.

N.B. The following message from our PGCE Course Director, Dr Claire Ball-Smith, went out at the June 2023 Partnership Forum to Professional Tutors:

“It is critical that colleagues attend mentor meetings during 2023/24 - we will be:

* preparing subject mentor teams for the 24/25 changes and expectations;
* setting up the pilot ITaP in subject teams;
* commencing mandatory mentor training from July 2024, ready for September 2024/25.”