

RESEARCH CENTRE FOR MOTIVATING LEARNING

THE INDUCTION YEAR IN WORCESTERSHIRE PRIMARY SCHOOLS Supporting Newly Qualified Teachers.

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THE RESEARCH

This research evaluation was commissioned by Worcestershire to evaluate how supported Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) feel by the LEA and by their school. The NQTs have induction programmes and conferences, Induction Tutors (Mentors) in school and some protected time. This evaluation is part of pilot activities with NQTs, linked with teacher retention issues, which seeks to explore evidence of professional impact of the range of support mechanisms and experiences that are available to NQTs – including their ITE experience, their induction, LEA county support, and support in their school. The evaluation focuses on support for developing positive behaviour management strategies; and on supporting NQTs in collecting evidence in support of their progress against the standards. Data collection is through questionnaires to all NQTs and Induction Tutors in the authority. 25 Induction Tutors responded, and 30 NQTs.

The research evaluated the impact of LEA and school support for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) with particular regard to a) behaviour management and b) effective portfolio building, that is collecting evidence in support of their progress against the standards. This evaluation is part of pilot activities with Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and seeks to demonstrate evidence of impact of the range of experiences that are available to NQTs – their ITE experience, their induction, LEA county support, and support in their school.

INDUCTION TUTOR RESPONSES.

1. Support and Training

18 Induction Tutors attended training and all reported that they found it helpful (5 very helpful). Two had individual training in school. The greatest concern about the induction tutor role was reported as time (11 responses) with 4 noting inexperience as their greatest concern. 2 were concerned with the responsibility for the NQT's potential failure. The greatest support was reckoned to be:

LEA IT Manual: 8

Past experience: 3

The NQT's PDP: 4

Other teachers (especially other experienced ITs): 7

NQT being proactive: 2.

The final point referred to the IT and the NQT working as a team establishing a good professional relationship.

Asked what additional support they would have found helpful, time was again dominant (7 of the 8 responses to this question). One would have liked a discussion with the NQT's ITT mentor at the HEI.

Asked what more the LEA could have done, they emphasised

- Clarity of funding to ensure that time is available
- Helpdesk
- Arrangements to discuss with other ITs
- Simplify induction process
- Training: observations; format of meetings.

Time was so dominant in their thinking that some expressed gratitude for current funding which released some time, whilst there is never enough time which can only be solved with additional funding. Two specified particular training they would have liked, in how to observe lessons and how to format meetings with the NQT. Other suggestions were an LEA point of contact (e.g. by email) to troubleshoot problems easily, more networking between Induction Tutors, and a request to simplify the whole process.

2. NQTs' strengths

Asked what strengths the NQT brought to the job, the vast majority covered personal qualities such as relationships and enthusiasm, with planning often specified, and curriculum expertise occasionally (3 responses). The total list is illuminating:

- Calm, sense of humour, lively (1)
- ICT, rapport with kids, planning, teamwork(2)
- Planning, teaching, assessment(3)
- Hard work(4)
- Enthusiasm & determination(5)
- Takes on constructive feedback and acts (7)
- Relationships with children(8)
- History & geography deadline(9)
- Music & IT skills(10)
- Teaching styles, high pupil expectations, ability to work in team(11)
- Enthusiasm, knowledge of NC(12)
- Relationship with children(13)
- Reflective, willing to learn(14)
- Team player, hard working
- Class management/general teaching(15)
- Planning/rapport with children(16)
- Purposeful, aware of what needs improving(17)
- Planning, enthusiasm, commitment(18)
- Planning(19)
- Keen, adaptability, willing to try ideas(20)
- Good classroom display and layout and understanding of year group(21)
- Competent and resourceful(22)
- Behaviour management, classroom organisation and management(23)
- Organisational skills, adaptability, gets on well with pupils/staff(24)

3. NQT's development needs

The NQT's development needs also produced a helpful list in which special needs, behaviour management, child protection, dealing with parents, and managing TAs stand out. Some reflect the personalities of particular NQTs, e.g. Independence – standing on their own feet; and not being defensive. The full list is as follows:

- Discipline, managing TA (1)
- Writing IEP's (2)
- Opportunities to develop as subject leader and observe good practice(3)
- Behaviour management
- Relationships with parents
- Independent planning (4)
- Displays, classroom & behavioural management (5)
- Looking at levels children should be aiming at for end of year(7)
- Behavioural management, lesson structure, expectations, working in a team. (8)
- English & maths outside (9)
- Child protection & wider professional role
- SEN knowledge(10)
- Assessment in PE, how to teach RE(11)
- needs to accept criticism without being defensive(12)
- handling aggressive/pushy parents(13)
- behaviour management(14)
- differentiation ICT
- confidence in own planning(15)
- pace of lessons, behaviour management(16)
- Differentiation, parents, specific subjects(17)
- Assessment and differentiation(18)
- Creative delivery(19)
- Parents, directing TA's(20)
- differentiation(21)
- use of TA, is more able(22)
- working with groups within class lessons(23)
- evaluation, develop contribution to the corporate life of the school(24)

4. Positive behaviour management

Asked how well has the NQT succeeded in developing positive behaviour management strategies, (Very well 14, Well 8, Not well enough 2) comments show that some are naturals, most developed gradually over the year, sometimes with a shaky start, but that overall they coped very well indeed with managing behaviour. The following selected comments are interesting:

- A fussing/emotional class, come long way in her care (1)
- Good use of range of strategies, zone boards, star tables etc. (2)
- Worked effectively and seamlessly as a job share class teacher(3)
- Good manner and they respond well(24)

There is a contrast between this and their ability ON ENTRY. Asked how well prepared the NQT was at the start to use positive behaviour management strategies, they replied **Very well prepared 5, Well prepared 11, Not well prepared enough 8**. In a sense two thirds were well prepared, a third not; and this reflects the range of development within ITT, the bottom third of student teachers also struggling in their NQT year. However these weaker NQTs made up ground as they gained confidence.

Again the comments are instructive:

- She always said she had not observed enough teachers for ideas. Wishes she was firmer at start (1)
- Not failing, just inexperienced (4)
- Not very conversant with the ideas/reasons-benefits of positive re-enforcement/good choices (20)
- Uses a variety of strategies, prepared to experiment with different ideas (21)
- Doing a good job! (24)

4.1 Residential Conference

Most NQTs went to the NQT residential conference and the Induction Tutors felt this to be useful, there was general lack of knowledge about what they did and what they got out of it. There was only one evaluative comment: "the NQT reported on excellence of Andy Vass, was keen to try ideas and able to identify with situations".

4.2 Discussion between Induction Tutor and NQT

Asked if they had had the chance to discuss behaviour management issues with your NQT, all reported that they often spoke with the NQT on behaviour management issues, coming out of observations, feedback and review meetings. NQTs are also encouraged to discuss matters with other staff (e.g. by observing other staff, or talking with the SENCO). Many opportunities were said to be informal, but frequent. Where behaviour management was not a problem, it came up less, but NQTs were reported to have good ideas.

On whether Andy Vass' book *Confident Classroom Leadership* had been useful, many did not know, but all but one thought that the NQT had made some use of it.

4.3 How Prepared were Induction Tutors in positive behaviour management ?

All described them selves as very well prepared to to support their NQT with positive behaviour management strategies, using words such as "very well prepared", "confident"

- It's what I enjoy can do it very positively to build confidence
- confident to deal with issue
- school has spent a lot of time on behavioural management
- very, we have had intensive INSET as a staff
- well prepared , using own experiences. Also in discussion with PHSE Co-ordinator
- I feel I am able to provide NQT with practical ways of trying to deal with certain types of behaviour
- having recently completed school based training and worked with it in nurture class setting of challenging pupils
- having been a teacher for many moons, I was able to give advice based upon my experiences!

Nevertheless a few thought it worthwhile to receive some updating.

4.4 Could the school have done better?

Asked how might the NQT have been better supported by school, most stated firmly that the NQT had been well supported. However, the comments made positive suggestions worth considering:

- More opportunities for observing experienced colleagues
- More team teaching with experienced teachers
- More time to work alongside the NQT to give her more opportunities to work with colleagues both in this school and others
- It would be better to have a mentor who is not the Headteacher
- More regular release time would assist discussion.

Asked how might the NQT have been better supported by LEA, the Induction Tutors were very forthcoming:

- They should have had 10% release time from the start – schools were misinformed that money was not available
- There should be NQT meetings (say termly) to focus on targets
- More contact with the ITT institutions during the training period
- There needs to be funding/low cost INSET/support for network groups
- Perhaps a few more courses aimed at NQTs throughout the year dealing with issues common to NQTs
- Plenty of notice needed about the residential conference
- Perhaps external NQT tracking in such as challenging school such as ours
- Earlier there could be training/opportunities as provided by key speaker
- More funding is needed for NQT courses, with non contact time
- Provide time for NQTs to talk with each other
- Money allocated for supply cover occasionally so that issues can be discussed.

The root of most suggestions is funding, which goes beyond LEAs to the funding formula.

5. Building a portfolio of evidence for standards.

5.1 Support for NQTs

These questions relate to how the NQT has been supported in building up a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate they have met the Induction Standards. The Induction Tutors were asked how well they thought their NQT has coped with evidencing NQT standards. Only two said “not well enough” with the other 20 split between “well” and “very well”. Their comments showed a mix of examples of organised NQTs, those needing reminders and those struggling. It was generally an area of concern, even though NQTs in the end achieved it well.

5.2 Preparation on entry

Asked how well prepared the NQT was on entry in the use of the Career Entry and Development Profile and how effective were they in using it to collect evidence of QTS standards, 5 (20%) felt that the NQTs were not properly prepared for the Portfolio as they should have been (the other 80% were either well or very well prepared). The comments relate to the anxieties and suggest that some found the Portfolio intruding into their focus on class management. For most however it does not appear to have been a problem. The Induction Tutors felt also that the guidance given was generally helpful, some feeling that it helped a lot.

5.3 Induction Tutor confidence

Asked how well prepared they felt in supporting the NQT in developing a portfolio, what has helped them most, and how could they have been better supported, they offered the following suggestions:

Comments

- Induction training for new mentors helped most
- Well prepared, building on past mentoring experience.
- Having done this (a portfolio) previously myself
- Helped by very useful LEA guidance/folder
- As first experience of being a tutor I found the portfolio invaluable particularly the break down of standards
- It helped to see the types of evidence others have collected
- My own performance management helped

- Helped by familiarity with ITT standards as a mentor, mostly by working with final year students.

Recommendations

- More time created
- Need more training on interpreting the standards
- More info given on portfolio to induction tutors -examples of what to be collected & why(7)
- I would be good to see exemplars of NQT portfolio with NQTs given exemplar completed portfolios to look at
- Training institutions could and should give advice on requirements and clear expectations
- Could NQTs have sample suggested evidence/ portfolio guidance
- Clearer number system needed for referencing
- More information given to induction tutors, I was not advised about any courses available
- We need clearer instructions

5.4 Overall effectiveness

Asked how effective they thought they had been in helping the NQT to build their portfolio, only 30% felt they had been effective with two thirds feeling there were things that could have been done better. Given the Induction Tutor pressures and workload, this is a reflective and not a surprising result. The comments point to lack of time and lack of information about the Portfolio. It was a higher priority for some than for others, an recognised as time-consuming and in need of non-contact time to support the process.

Specific points below reflected on how the process might be done better:

- I have supported as much as possible informally and formally
- She has built up her own portfolio following advice from me, but she has worked hard at her own evidence etc. Together we have used this to target weaker areas.
- This role is important, and I do think funding should be available to enable tutors/NQTs to attend courses. I had no experience of this role and would have welcomed support in the early days

I found it to be a very responsible duty and needed to refer to portfolio before I was sure of requirements.

THE NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS (NQTs)

The Primary NQTs were mostly female and worked in situations from Foundation Stage, KS1 and 2, and middle schools. The specialisms they claimed for themselves covered a wide range of curriculum subjects, except for the humanities.

6. Residential:

All NQTs who attended found the residential at least satisfactory and for the most part helpful or very helpful, about half (13/27) describing it as 'very helpful'.

7. Concerns.

The NQTs were asked to indicate what had caused them the most concern during their induction year. The dominant response not unsurprisingly involved the broad issue of time management and workload, which, as one said, induces sense of failure since she could not satisfy all the demands of 'government directives', school and pupils. Part of this time pressure involved the paperwork involved with school and the standards-related entries to the Portfolio. Other concerns revolved around planning for teaching and managing the class:

- pupils' behaviour linked with the young teachers' lack of experience and confidence
- differentiation with particular regard to the inclusion of SEN pupils, and the gifted and talented

- Planning – how to achieve the balance of lesson content to time available, and the consequent timing of lessons
- What level of work to expect, and further issues of assessment
- How to deal with mixed age classes (both in planning and provision)
- Dealing with pastoral care issues, the broader role of the teacher.

Two other issues are also pertinent to the NQT experience: a request for staff development (CPD) courses, the issue being that funding was not available; and in one case finding a permanent full-time job.

8. Successes

The NQTs were asked what they regard as their greatest success. Their replies focused on confident pupils enjoying their work and making progress within a context of good relationships between teachers, pupils and parents. In detail they responded that their successes had been:

- a) Confident teaching and confident children.
- b) Successfully managing behaviour.
- c) Building relationships with staff, pupils and parents – “positive comments from parents/colleagues, seeing children develop in confidence”.
- d) Pupil enjoyment, progress and relationships with pupils – “Being able to see children’s progress”; “My relationship with class and in particular a very disaffected boy”; “Seeing the progress pupils have made, I feel I have established environment that promotes learning”; “The achievement of some children in my lower maths group. Parents saying their child really enjoys coming to school”.
- e) Success with particular disaffected and difficult children – “while I was in the classroom of maintaining the engagement of a pupil who was excluded after I left”.
- f) Being part of a successful OFSTED – “ Being part of a successful OFSTED inspection in my first term of teaching”.
- g) Promotion to a position of responsibility – “Promoted to deputy maths leader”; “establishing a bright stimulating environment and being the leader of a very good team in the schools foundation stage”.
- h) Class assembly, barn dance, memorable successful lessons
- i) Employment in an enjoyable job – “Getting full time permanent post in a school I particularly wanted to work in and enjoying”
- j) Independence – “Being left to get on with it!”; “Taking over a class mid-way through a term for maternity cover”.
- k) Working in a team – “Working well within year group team”
- l) Enthusiasm for the subject (science, D&T, singing were mentioned) – “bringing enthusiasm into some subject, e.g. science and DT and lots of hands on contact”.

9. Initial Teacher Training

90.7% rated their training as preparing them well or very well for teaching, with one third of the whole opting for the higher rating.

The range of training courses and schemes was broad, ranging from the 3 or 4 year BEd or equivalent, PGCE, PGCE by distance learning, SCITT, GTP. Some comments reflected excellent quality provision:

- I felt very confident and comfortable in school because of this and also received training to a very high standard. More PGCE courses should be run like this.
- Excellent course

The few critical comments have to be seen against this background:

- PGCE course, a lot to take in, in short space of time.
- Needed to know about mixed aged planning more
- Not enough on how to plan lessons effectively
- I think the PGCE distance option prepared me less well than a full time course would have done but no course can prepare you for actuality

Planning for mixed ages may not have been something that the one student teacher met on her teaching practice. Planning, especially in detail with the whole curriculum, is a daunting prospect even it has been emphasised in training.

10. Best aspects

They were asked about the best aspects of training, which are set out in order of popularity (numbers of responses in brackets):

- Confidence (15)
- Experience (15)
- Planning (5)
- Learning & Teaching (3)
- Mentoring/tutoring (3)
- Curriculum (3)
- Literacy Strategy (2)
- Numeracy Strategy (2)
- ICT (1)
- Breadth of understanding of schools (1)

11. Recommendations for improvement

The NQTs were asked how their ITT training could have been improved. This provides evidence of their anxieties during the NQT year, as well as suggesting how priorities might be changed in the ITT programme. Their anxieties set the agenda for CPD during their NQT year. Only one ITT course was badly criticised, a new course with teething problems. Of the rest, the NQT comments show the following list of NQT anxieties, in order of number of expressions of concern.

A. Concerns most frequently expressed, with **planning** and **behaviour management** being the issues most frequently cited. No single issue received more than a few references and so did not point to widespread structural problems.

a) **Planning** (6 references)

A range of issues were identified: how to plan schemes and lessons from the strategies; mixed aged planning; how much can be fitted sensibly into a lesson; how to plan realistically; and planning for the Foundation Stage. These are all fine tuning issues rather than a complaint that they were not taught how to plan, although there is some criticism of Foundation Stage provision which is detailed below.

b) **Behaviour management** (5 references)

This was described generally as 'behaviour management'; one NQT expressed it as 'resolving issues between children', that is conflict resolution.

c) **Parents** (4 references)

These comments hint at a feeling of insecurity when dealing with parents, and parents evenings. Some student teachers may have been involved in parents evenings in their school experience, since this is a small minority who are concerned. One said she wanted "ideas/strategies for dealing with parents" as though the experience is threatening. It is hard to know how a training course could have provided experience of talking with parents if this is not encountered in school, so an answer may be to encourage schools to ensure that student teachers are involved with parents.

d) **Portfolio building** (4 references)

A number referred to their Portfolio or Standards' File as something they were not taking in their stride. A particular comment was how to create high quality records and evaluations for the Portfolio. Good habits built up during the ITT period could help NQTs to transfer the experience to their CPD file.

e) **Special Educational Needs** (4 references)

More time was sought on learning about special educational needs, writing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and information helping them to deal with specific disorders.

The following were also of concern to a few:

a) **Assessment** (3 references)

This refers to clearer guidance on how to diagnose levels within children's work, rather than working it out by trial and error. The fact that at least one respondent was organising SATs in her first year of teaching provides some context for the anxiety.

b) **Job advice** (3 references)

In addition to general guidance, this referred to the process of putting together a persuasive personal statement.

c) **Dealing with TAs and Nursery Nurses** (2 references)

Expressed by one as 'understanding and awareness of TAs and nursery nurses', and by the other as 'managing' them. This may be in tune with the next item, where some inappropriateness of provision for the Foundation Stage is noted

d) **Foundation Stage/KS1** (2 references)

Without making too much of simply two references identifying this as a problem, two NQTs felt that their course was too Primary focused with a greater emphasis on KS2 and did not address issues and procedures of early childhood. Where the course for early years teachers is Primary rather than focusing on 3-7 years old, this may be worth the ITT team investigating.

Other issues identified by one person:

- a) Writing Reports
- b) ITT sessions to be interactive. (referring to one tutor)
- c) Teaching swimming
- d) Teaching PE
- e) Foundation subjects needed more time.

These point to areas inadequately covered because of insufficient time in ITT courses, and could point to areas of need in CPD for teachers early in their careers.

12. Positive Behaviour Management

12.1 Preparation

The NQTs were asked about how well prepared they were through their ITE for managing pupil behaviour positively. 5 out of 30 (17%) said not well enough with 83% saying well (57%) or very well (27%). It was generally recognised that the crucial time for learning behaviour management was in the school experience settings, but several emphasised that this needed to be supplemented by guidance in lectures. The input by Andy Vass was highlighted as very useful, and other ITT sessions were described as good. Some described how their progress in school had been hindered by their lack of coping strategies. The feedback described a balance between the discussion and guidance given both in sessions and by tutors and mentors, and the need to try things out themselves in school. They needed both to become confident.

Two particular items were emphasised, pertinent although only mentioned by one person each:

- Physical handling – the rights and wrongs of physical interventions involving physical contact with children
- 'Problem' children – challenging pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

All except one NQT felt that the Induction process had helped them to develop their strategies for positive behaviour management, split evenly between 'very well' and 'well'.

Experience in school and advice from colleagues is the most common support cited by the majority, a number attesting to the continuum in development from a foundation created in ITT and through Induction, one which must always be continuing because there are always things to learn. "[ITT] gave me lots of practical useful ideas to adapt and use" said one, with several others praising ITT mentor. One pointed to additional support from a Beacon School. The NQT residential course was mentioned as a supporting factor, and in particular contributions by Andy Vass whose ideas were tried out and found effective. "I am constantly developing strategies and trying out ideas suggested by colleagues" is a typical comment.

12.2 Andy Vass

All found his contribution useful, most found it very useful with words like fantastic, inspirational and superb being used.. Their comments were that he talked from experience so it was useful for practice, it "really made me evaluate my own strategies", he "made positive behaviour management a challenge not a battle", "Lots of suggestions-easy to transfer to classroom".

When asked about the usefulness of Andy Vass' book, which they had been given, comments varied from useful/very useful/excellent to comments about lack of time for reading with "so much paperwork". The over-riding opinion was that the book had been very helpful.

12.3 School support

All NQTs who responded were satisfied with the support given to them in school to develop behaviour management strategies with two thirds opting for 'very well', one third for 'well'. Comments made it clear that their schools have both policies and active strategies for managing behaviour positively, (as one said, "totally focused on it") giving NQTs plenty of mentor support and indeed support from other staff members also. There were examples of NQTs having opportunities to observe more experienced staff. One indicated that "due to the amount of behaviour problem children that I have in my class I have several outside agencies guide me in different directions". In general therefore the NQTs reported excellent support within school.

12.4 Progress

Asked how much progress do they had made in positive behaviour management over the NQT year, all who responded said they had made progress with two thirds saying "a great deal" of progress. Their comments made it clear however that they recognised that they still had a long way to go. One said "I am learning new and improved strategies daily", showing this is a dynamic rather than static aspect of professional work.

They recognised that positive discipline have to be internalised so they "will gradually come natural". Some talked about troublesome characters, including attention seekers and those who do not reach their potential (underachievers). Greater understanding of ADHD and SEN were commented on, and one had attended a further course on assertive discipline.

12.5 Helpful advice

Asked what advice has been most helpful to them, the following list is compiled from their practical suggestions:

Body language:

- Keep smiling
- Do not (wherever possible) lose your sense of humour

Communication:

- Ensure that pupils are aware of your expectations
- Be consistent
- Avoid confrontational situations. Manage such situations non-confrontationally, and try to see them coming and nip them in the bud.
- Positive praise works better than constant negative comments.
- Make statements of expectation rather than requests to pupils.
- The importance of language used.
- Say 'Thank you' after compliance; but be careful that the use of "please" does not make you seem to plead.
- Make children aware of consequences of their choices
- Be firm but fair and listen before judging
- The 'maybe/but' strategy

Confident manner:

- Don't doubt your own ability
- Enjoy your teaching so that you convey enjoyment of learning to pupils
- Don't forget that the vast majority of the class are behaving in a positive fashion and are willing to learn
- Focus on the important things -like teaching – and don't be distracted by trivia.

13. Portfolio: Development of a portfolio of evidence for NQT standards.

These questions relate to how the NQTs had been supported in building up a portfolio of evidence to show they had met the Induction standards.

13.1 ITT

Asked to what extent did their initial teacher training help them to collect evidence for standards, most (80.6%) felt that they had been reasonably prepared. This meant that they could continue the process of evidence collection started in their ITT with which they had become familiar. They saw it as two stages of a single process, which helped them to

evaluate their professional practice. However, one in 5 found themselves feeling vulnerable in this area at the beginning of their NQT year as they had not made this connection.

13.2 LEA Induction

Asked whether the LEA NQT Induction Portfolio and TTA guidance helped to support them in developing their evidence collection for Induction Standards, all except one were satisfied that it had. Most however opted for 'well' rather than 'very well'. In a situation where the standards require "a lot of paperwork", the LEA material was seen as clarifying what is required.

13.3 Efficiency

Asked about the efficiency of collecting evidence for the Portfolio, the general feeling is that the process was not really efficient. Comments suggested it was hard to find time, although sometimes the admission is that the NQTs themselves were not being efficient. One said "I just keep meaning to do it and don't", and another "Once I remember I do put a lot of evidence in there, such as, monitored lesson outlines, photos, etc", and a third "This is more a reflection of my own lack of application to the task". Schools can make a difference, with the induction tutor stressing its importance and reminding NQTs to keep the evidence collection on the front burner. Once the NQT establishes a routine, it becomes easy.

13.4 School

Asked how effective has their school been in supporting their portfolio building, most (71.4%) were supportive of the school although most opted for 'effective' rather than 'very effective'. According to comments, schools varied from being uninterested to very supportive. School support appears to be effective but not always proactive.

13.5 Further Help Needed

The NQTs were asked what one thing might have helped to improve the development of their portfolio? Their responses fell in two camps:

- a) Concise focused information/guidance, plus an exemplar
- b) More time to do it

One added that it would help if the Induction Tutor reviewed progress regularly (say fortnightly).

14 OVERALL RATING

14.1 Support for the Induction Process

The NQTs were asked as an overall grade, how they rated the support offered in their induction year. All recorded it as satisfactory or above, with all but one grading it good or very good. In general, they reported their schools as being very supportive and helped them to build confidence. One said that "no one from university checks to see how you're doing" which may relate to a misapprehension of the Masters' level accreditation of the induction year which provides on-line support rather than "checking".

14.2 Suggested improvements

On how the induction year could have been improved, they together gave the following list:

- Less bureaucracy and paperwork;
- Those with a January start missed out on the residential;
- More funding to attend outside courses would be helpful;
- Reduce the feeling of isolation
- Give more preparation in the ITT course for induction issues
- Provide more opportunity to talk with other NQTs
- Offer subject specific training

A number recorded their first year as "great", "fantastic". One described the induction year as faultless, even though she had dropped out owing to her "own difficulties".

14.3 ITT effectiveness

NQTs were asked how they rated the preparation for teaching provided by their initial teacher training. Two found it unsatisfactory, and the rest opted for satisfactory, good or very good. The comments were split between praise for ITT ("I was as well prepared as I

believe you can be on PGCE course"; "I was ready to start teaching"; "Felt very confident and ready, I also felt well prepared for my interview") and criticism both small and large. On a fine tuning level, involving both ITT and school placement procedures, one "would have liked more on SEN". Another would have liked "More presence by mentor in class whilst I was teaching to give feedback, more time for me to observe others after doing some teaching and then try out their tactics myself". Another said "we had general lectures about assessments but I felt I learnt from scratch this year. Not enough information on reports or parents evening" and had clearly missed out on following these up in school. More seriously, one employed as an early years teacher found that the Foundation Stage was not covered in her ITT programme: "Unfortunately due to the lack of input about the foundation stage I have found this year difficult. I have had to turn to other teachers and advisers in the LEA". Another, who left teaching owing to stress after only one term, said "Although we followed a distance learning course the support offered by university staff should have been proactive, not reactive. Communication and organisation very poor I thought". Of course the student teacher should also have been proactive in asking for support. This is a case of a weak student spiraling into despair and failure.