



VIAT share their experience of ITT

Please tell us a bit about your trust and your role (for example, size, geographical, social and contexts)

We have nine VIAT schools in Maidstone – four secondary and five primary schools. The trust is made-up of two large, more established primary schools and three one form entry primary schools. The secondary schools in the trust are all mixed non-selective secondary schools apart from Invicta Girls Grammar which is a selective female only secondary school. All of the secondaries have over one thousand students and the primaries have approx. 400 children in each of the larger schools.

What do you see as the main benefits of being involved in teacher training?

The main benefits of being involved in teacher training are the collaboration of supporting training teachers across the schools. We are very proud of our trainees who have gone from strength to strength and developed their own careers within the trust. An example of this would be several teaching assistants who have completed their training year within the trust and then gone on to become early career teachers, middle leaders and some more established senior leaders as part of the leadership groups in their own school.

We find that having teacher trainees in schools provides a supportive, collaborative and nurturing environment for those students entering the world of education and needing to see what it is like first-hand teaching and being part of school life on a daily basis.

What challenges have you faced?and how have you overcome these?

The main challenge that all schools have faced is recruiting new teachers into primary and secondary teaching due to the current situation within education in the UK. We pride ourselves in supporting the trainee teachers we have trained within our schools to feel prepared, equipped with an excellent skill set and confident to enter the world of teaching. We ensure that all teacher trainees have a dedicated and experienced mentor to guide them through their training years and to work alongside them as part of their early career.

How have you managed workload of your trainees and mentors?

Mentors and trainees in each school are all given protected time on their teaching timetables to meet and have conversations to enable development and growth. We encourage all of our mentors to meet together, not just at mentor training but once every large term to discuss expectations and how they are supporting their trainees in different, bespoke situations and scenarios. We encourage the

trainees to set up an e-mail group to be able to chat and talk openly with each other about how their year is progressing and share any worries they have in a relaxed peer-to-peer environment.

Is there any advice you would give to other school leaders wishing to get more involved in ITT?

I would say to school leaders to wholeheartedly become more involved in ITT as it only has positive outcomes and offers development or career opportunities for mentors and staff if you have teacher trainees within your schools. It has been a pleasure to see so many teachers train within the trust and go on to have successful careers as teachers and leaders in our schools.