



The National Association of
School-Based Teacher Trainers

NASBTT Opinion Piece

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Change and Renewal: what does 2019-20 have in store for initial teacher training?

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The past 12 months have seen unprecedented change for the initial teacher training (ITT) sector, with the publication of the Department for Education (DfE) Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy and Early Career Framework (ECF).

These policies mean that, for the next 12 months, ITT providers must prepare diligently for a number of related initiatives and support the government's commitment to helping great people become teachers and making sure they receive high-quality teacher training.

It is most definitely a period of "Change and Renewal" for the sector, and NASBTT has identified eight key priorities for the year ahead:

1. Early Career Framework

We are working hard to ensure that the delivery mechanism which is agreed for the ECF is in ITT providers' favour and does not overcomplicate the system – as part of this, we are pushing for a bigger role for providers in the 'appropriate body' sector. We do, however, feel that £350 million is not enough to cover the delivery of the ECF across the country and mentor training. We are especially concerned that schools may not be able to fund effective mentoring.

2. ITT core curriculum content

I am on the DfE's Core Content for ITT advisory group, which has drafted new guidance that will underpin the training programme for new teachers, starting with the core content for ITT and leading into the ECF. As with the ECF, the importance of high-quality mentoring is fundamental to the success of ITT and this is recognised. It is important to align guidance for ITT providers with the ECF because effective mentoring lies at the heart of high-quality ITT.

3. Education Inspection Framework

I am also on the DfE's ITE advisory group, which is helping Ofsted to align ITE to the new framework. We have already recommended that Ofsted should train individuals specifically to inspect ITT providers. We anticipate that subject knowledge, mentoring, SEND and behaviour will be key themes through the framework. Our view is it should value and measure those things which indicate high-quality provision and allow ITT providers the freedom to innovate.

4. Subject knowledge enhancement

Primary and secondary teachers are now required to demonstrate in-depth subject knowledge. In response, we have created and launched a Subject Knowledge and Curriculum Design Toolkit. We remain concerned, however, about the difficulty of training teachers ‘in depth’ in all subjects within the timeframe of teacher training. Our view is also that the development of in-depth subject knowledge cannot solely be the remit of ITT providers.

5. Mental health and wellbeing

The prominence and importance of mental health and wellbeing is growing in schools – both for pupils and staff. In order for teachers to best support the children in their care, looking out for their own wellbeing is of the utmost importance. We are working with the Royal Foundation on advice and guidance on mental health and wellbeing of children for all trainee teachers. We have also devised an Establishing a Counselling, Wellbeing and Mental Health First Aid Provision for Trainee Teachers workshops programme.

6. Teacher educator development

Teacher educators have a vital role in schools and we believe this should be valued and formally recognised. We have developed and delivered a range of Teacher Educator Programmes to support CPD and are now creating a professional learning space for teacher educators which will have an impact at home and abroad. We are also supporting the DfE in their development of an NPQ for teacher educators, drawing on our experience in this area.

7. Changes to skills’ tests

Following the scrapping of professional skills’ tests, we are working with ITT providers to implement a new system of guidance on the fundamental English and mathematics proficiencies all teachers need. It is only right that providers are trusted to make professional judgements about the English and mathematics skills of prospective teachers – just as they do for subject knowledge, suitability to work with children and a range of other attributes.

8. Review of the ITT application process

A change to the process for applications to ITT places is underway, which myself and NASBTT are supporting, and the outcome is likely to streamline the process. There is scope to simplify this for candidates and it is right and proper to do so – however, our view is that care must be taken not to undermine the ITT supply base.

Emma Hollis is Executive Director of the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT)

-ENDS-

NASBTT is a registered charity committed to promoting high-quality schools-led programmes of training, education and professional development of teachers.

NASBTT represents the interests of schools-led teacher training provision in relation to the development and implementation of national policy developments. Our members include SCITT providers, School Direct Lead Schools, Teaching Schools, HEIs as well as a range of other organisations involved in the education and professional development of teachers. We have 195 members representing almost 7,000 individual trainees.

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