



The National Association of
School-Based Teacher Trainers

NASBTT Opinion Piece

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Making the case for the “efficacy” of SCITTs

I was invited to speak at the Schools and Academies Show on *The Efficacy of SCITT (School-Centred Initial Teacher Training Programme): Are we utilising and standardising this pathway enough to create world-class teachers?*

Efficacy, by definition, means the ability to produce a desired or intended result. So the question becomes: “What is the desired result from a programme of school-based training which is entirely designed, managed, governed and facilitated by serving school staff?”

If the answer to that question is: to train great teachers, then the sector speaks for itself. Around a quarter of all entrants to the profession are currently trained by SCITT providers, 95% of which are good or better with a staggering 43% outstanding according to Ofsted’s grading system. Metrics commonly used to assess the quality of training provision such as completion and employment rates show that SCITTs perform brilliantly, with above whole-sector averages in both measures year-on-year.

The last Newly-Qualified Teachers (NQTs) annual survey on the quality and effectiveness of their initial teacher training, published in September, celebrated the positive experiences enjoyed by student teachers training in SCITTs. For example, those who trained through SCITT-led postgraduate courses and SCITT-led School Direct (salaried) were the most positive about the quality of their training (mean of 8.25 and 8.17 respectively compared to a mean of 7.66 overall). Other data-led indicators are summarised again at the end this article.

In addition to all this good news, however, I wonder whether the answer to that initial question around efficacy and whether we are utilising and standardising the SCITT pathway enough to create world-class teachers actually goes deeper than statistics and data can measure.

The impact of school involvement in the training and development of new entrants to the profession can have a profound impact on individual schools and communities of schools working in partnership with their SCITT.

At an ‘on the ground’ level, anecdotal evidence tells us that hosting a trainee teacher in the classroom as their mentor gives serving teachers a fresh look at their own practice and, invariably, leads to an ‘upping of their game’ in the classroom. The very process of evaluating one’s own practice in order to explain this to a novice can be transformative for experienced professionals – and the chance to share expertise and knowledge with the next generation can improve morale, self-worth and improve retention.

These positive outcomes can only be achieved, however, if the mentor is given the time, space and respect from their school leaders to do the job effectively – remove any one of these and the opposite impact can be seen with mentors feeling overwhelmed and under-valued.

Any school considering entering the ITT space must be fully committed to valuing the role of the school-based teacher educator – a role which is only going to grow in importance and stature as the government’s plans for the Early Career Framework (ECF) are realised.

For middle and senior leaders in the school setting, involvement in ITE can offer opportunities to contribute to the design and facilitation of quality training opportunities. In turn, this feeds into the school’s own improvement priorities, with fresh ideas, professional communities and even new sources of income feeding into the school. As new initiatives are introduced and new research comes to light, it is invariably ITT providers who first promote this new knowledge and understanding. By engaging with ITT curriculum design, school leaders ensure they are at the forefront of educational knowledge.

An additional benefit to schools is the opportunity to visit and learn from other schools within the ITT partnership. Often, partnerships grow around ITT provision that would not otherwise exist and the opportunity for leaders in schools to be involved with quality assurance processes, training and development opportunities for trainees means that they are often asked to visit other schools within the partnership to observe, train or plan with colleagues.

As a sector, education sorely lacks regular, structured opportunities to learn from others and involvement in ITT can open up a whole new world of professional connections which are often invaluable in ways that go beyond the development of provision. I have seen successful MATs grow out of these connections, joint recruitment events planned by heads who met through their ITT partnership, school-to-school support and secondment opportunities being explored and countless other examples of joint working which might never have happened without the ITT partnership to facilitate collegiate working.

So – do SCITTs demonstrate efficacy within the sector? The answer is a resounding yes.

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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