



The National Association of
School-Based Teacher Trainers

NASBTT Opinion Piece

Emma Hollis

14th January 2019

Professional development pivotal to the ITT sector's ambitions in 2019

2018 was a year of great promise for change for those of us working in Initial Teacher Training (ITT).

At the heart of that promise is the Department for Education (DfE) consultation on Strengthening Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and Improving Career Progression for Teachers, which set out the possibilities for seismic shift in the teacher training landscape, revolutionising the early career support offered to teachers and going a considerable way to making the profession attractive once more.

The coming year will arguably be the most critical yet in terms of addressing teacher recruitment. I see three key priorities for the next 12 months –all centered on professional development for those most in need.

1. Entitlement for early-career teachers

The Early Career Framework (ECF), which was supported by almost 90 per cent of respondents to the consultation, offers a longer period of support and guidance with clear entitlement (and entitlement, I think, is a key word) to professional development, access to mentoring and coaching and, potentially, reduced timetabling. By clearly setting out the entitlement to support that every early career teacher should receive, this is now far more transparent and less dependent on the whims of a particular school leadership team. We must ensure, however, that political instability does not disrupt the potentially transformative plans for this entitlement to professional development for all early career teachers. Schools remain concerned about the costs of such an ambitious programme and yet, if funded and resourced appropriately, this really could be a game-changer. All eyes are on the next government spending review to see if this becomes a reality.

2. Effective mentoring and mentor support

The entitlement to a longer induction period means a greater need for highly-qualified mentors in schools. Quality mentoring must continue to be a focus of the DfE, and ITT providers are ideally placed to develop a network of highly trained, expert mentors who could be deployed into schools. I can foresee a situation whereby schools must have a dedicated mentoring lead as they do for safeguarding and Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). This would be a position on a par with those two roles and would be rewarded and valued as such. This individual would have overarching strategic responsibility for mentoring early career teachers, training all staff on what it means to be a mentor –this should be a set of skills common to all teachers –and to whom all staff report. Again, this will need appropriate funding and genuine recognition to be given to the role within schools.

3. Teacher educator development

While most of the rhetoric is around in-school recruitment and retention, feedback we have received points to very little corresponding growth in professional development opportunities for those responsible for the education of teachers. As yet, there is no formal qualification or status (such as one might see with a SENCO or Safeguarding Lead) for the school-based teacher educator. There has never been a more important time for investment in School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) and School Direct providers and, especially, teacher educators, whose remit it is to provide schools with high-quality candidates. With the introduction of the ECF, the role of the school-based teacher educator is set to become an even greater priority and it is imperative that those tasked with the professional development of trainee and early career teachers are given the training and recognition they deserve.

The past 12 months have seen celebrations in the ITT sector, with 99% of provision now rated either good or outstanding and a staggering 43% of School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) provision rated outstanding. We welcomed the raising of the fee cap for SCITT providers from £9,000 to £9,250, which removes any artificial distinction between SCITT and HE providers. However, we need to ensure there is continued support for partnership working and a change in the dialogue from schools-led or HE teacher training providers to a recognition that both are valuable and both are needed for a vibrant, choice-driven marketplace.

How good can 2019 be? Only time will tell, of course, but a focus on professional development will get us closer to where we need to be.

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.

Website: www.nasbtt.org.uk

Social: <https://twitter.com/nasbtt> (@NASBTT)

Media Resources: nasbtt.org.uk/media-hub

Media Contact:

Phil Smith

NASBTT PR consultant

Office: 01778 218180

Mobile: 07866 436159

Email: phil@philsmithcommunications.co.uk