

Support for small rural schools to engage with ITT

Small and rural schools have an important part to play in ensuring the pipeline of teachers into the profession, however they can face unique challenges.

There is often a perception that there isn't the capacity for small rural schools to engage in ITT due to there being so few teaching staff, most of whom already wear a number of leadership hats. This can lead to issues with recruitment of early career teachers, as this group of teachers might be unaware of these schools as they have not hosted placements or they might be fearful of applying to schools where they would be the only teacher in a year group or teaching mixed age and sometimes mixed key stage classes.

Stage 1

Before we can solve problems with recruitment of ECTs we need to encourage people into teaching! With the cost of living, trainees are increasingly wanted to work within their local schools – to train and to work. Therefore the people who will become the teachers of the future are already there within the schools' catchments – former pupils, parents or people who pass the school every day. They need to know that there are opportunities to train to teach...

Ideas for promotion of teacher training:

- Add a 'Get into Teaching' link to the school website, to school newsletters
- Put up a banner to advertise teaching as a career
- Follow and like social media posts promoting local teacher training providers
- Advertise links with teacher training provider and local information sessions in parent/carer coms
- Invite people who express an interest to look around school and pass on the number of the teacher training provider and a name to talk to
- Share links with existing staff – there may be people within the school who would be interesting in training to teach but because they don't see trainee teachers within their school don't think it's a possibility

Stage 2

Once there is engagement from initial teacher training applicants from the local area, schools might want to consider offering placements. Whilst hosting a placement can seem like hard work for an already stretched staff, there is payback. Consider being offered another teacher to support within a class – this is what you are getting. Time spent supporting a trainee to get up and running in the early days of placement pays off as the trainee begins to take increasing responsibility for the class. By the end of the training year they are responsible for 80% of the teaching timetable! Trainees are also usually encouraged

to be involved within the wider life of the school. In addition, most providers reimburse schools for the cost of releasing the appropriate member of staff to support the trainee. Schools benefit from trainees and mentors who have received up to date training

Ideas for supporting possible placements in small schools:

- Initially speak with local training provider to discuss what the possibilities are
- Look closely at structure/ personnel/ expectations / what support the training provider offers schools – this information should also be available in their partnership agreement
- Consider what the school might be able to offer - whole placements / shorter placements / experiences / expert inputs etc
- Consider staffing – which class teachers would be great role models – can they not just model great teaching but also explain what they are doing and why? Are they prepared to ‘let go’ of their class to allow a trainee increasing ownership of teaching and learning?
- Which staff would make great mentors – who can see the bigger picture, who is able to clearly guide a trainee to ensure consistent progress, who has the capacity to give time to the trainee?
- Could schools within a trust offer a number of placement classes and use one experienced mentor to work with trainees in a number of schools?