

Recruitment and Retention: A Practical Toolkit

Good News Stories

Recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers can be improved by having clear pathways of progression, and examples of success stories across the profession. You can use good news stories in any way you wish to promote teaching and support your recruitment.

Case Study - ITT, Recruitment and Beyond at Ignite Federation

***Andrew Edwards** is the Executive Head of the Ignite Federation comprising of two primary schools on the Warwickshire/Leicestershire border. Andrew is an experienced leader with a wealth of experience from the worlds of both business and education. In this piece, Andrew shares his experience of engaging with Initial Teacher Training at a federation and school level and offers insights on the significant benefits and rewards being reaped.*



With significant ongoing challenges around recruitment and retention of qualified teachers, it was clear that we, as a federation of two schools, we had to face the challenge head on and find solutions. Having already undertaken a huge amount of work to address many issues affecting retention by tackling workload, mental health and work/life balance and levels of professional autonomy, we knew that next we had to tackle recruitment.

Following the pandemic, a brief market analysis together with personal anecdotal evidence suggested that there was an untapped market of people who could become great teachers. We recognised that this potential market could supply people with the passion and desire that is required to survive in such a professionally tough environment along with the experience and qualities to maintain the high levels of resilience that are also essential.

And so, our formal partnership with the Coventry & Central Warwickshire Teaching School Hub alongside the University of Warwick was born.

Communication is key

It was clear that getting the word out there was going to be key. A dedicated page was created on both our school websites which included a quick and simple 'contact us' form as well as direct links for further information:



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- <https://www.therevelprimaryschool.co.uk/train-to-teach-with-us/>
- <https://www.wolveyschool.co.uk/train-to-teach-with-us/>

A dedicated email address 'teachertraining@' was created to keep things separate and manageable as well as to provide a dedicated look and feel.

Key school staff attended the various training and partnership meetings with the University of Warwick so that we knew exactly what to expect and could ensure adequate resources (personnel and time) could be put in place.

We then set about targeting our key potential markets: existing ambitious support staff together with our local community of parents and neighbours.

- All staff in school receive regular reminders that we are available for training should they wish to progress their careers.
- Individuals are approached and annual performance reviews are used to signpost potentially interested staff to myself for further discussion.
- Coventry and Central Warwickshire Teaching School Hub provide banners promoting the programme for the gates of both schools
- Newsletters include a regular feature to promote Initial Teacher Training, including profiling recent successful trainees who we have now employed as teachers in school.

Benefits - recruitment and beyond

As well as supporting us with high quality teacher recruitment, our engagement with and commitment to ITT has led to other benefits:

- ✓ Through regular engagement with various partnership resources and events at the University of Warwick, existing members of staff not only gain and rehearse valuable skills in mentorship and coaching but have also accessed a wide range of free CPD covering areas such as having difficult conversations and making reasonable adjustments for staff who may have additional needs.
- ✓ At a whole school level, our approach helps us to 'mold' potential recruits during the training process; we are able to assess their true potential and understanding our way of working is supportive of transition into the ECT phase should we recruit them.
- ✓ The approach has also enabled senior leaders to identify gaps in skills or weaker areas of pedagogy within our staff teams which may potentially have remained hidden had they not been exposed through access to cutting-edge research brought to us by a strong University partnership.

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- ✓ Discovering new and enthusiastic entrants who have benefited from being immersed in school life and community during training has helped to ensure that they eventually enter the profession with their eyes fully wide open and we believe this is sure to help retention in the longer term.

Over recent years we have trained 5 trainees and have two more recruited for next year. Most of these trainees have direct or more indirect links to our schools. As a federation, we are now realistically in the position of training more high-quality new teachers than we have vacancies for; our approach is not only benefiting pupils in our school community but those beyond too!

I will leave you with a recent quote from a parent who had expressed concerns over an Early Career Teacher, who we trained, being appointed to teach Year 6: 'Having met Mrs O'Brien and seeing first-hand the positive impact she is having, I can only say it was an inspired decision'

For more insights into innovative ways schools are recruiting and retaining teachers, see our short case studies in the 'Resources for Schools' section:

<https://arthurterryteachingschool.atlp.org.uk/innovative-approaches-to-recruiting-teachers/>

Or consult the innovative approaches reading list:

<https://arthurterryteachingschool.atlp.org.uk/innovative-approaches-reading-list/>

Want to improve your school's recruitment success by getting more involved in ITT? Let us help you to find the right provider for you:

[Initial Teacher Training | Get Involved](#)



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Case Study - Teacher Training through a SCITT

Teacher Training through a SCITT - Lydia (School Centred Initial Teacher Training)

Trainees who undertake a SCITT programme, are typically based in a school 4 days a week from September to July, with a second placement experience during the spring or summer term. Their training provision, academic study and PGCE assignments are planned throughout the year and run alongside teaching practice.

Lydia chose to train through a SCITT. Here's why.

Why did you choose a career in teaching?

After completing her degree, Lydia spent some time as an actor, but had always planned a career in teaching, not only because she wanted to make a positive difference to children's lives, but also because she recognised the stability and longevity of career that teaching provided.

Why did you choose to train through a SCITT programme?

Lydia chose a small SCITT and was clear that she felt well supported throughout the year. The SCITT team were easily accessible and strong relationships were formed. In the initial stages of applying, she was able to have a personal conversation with the SCITT director who provided detailed information about the course and gave advice and reassurance regarding how the course would fit with her personal circumstances. Lydia felt able to make informed decisions following this.

As part of the SCITT programme, Lydia was based in the same school for most of the year. She felt a strong sense of belonging because of this, being involved in wider school activities and being treated as a member of staff. The experience gave her an appreciation of what working full-time in a school was like. Lydia built strong, professional relationships with staff and children, and she was ultimately employed by her 'core' school.

Most importantly, Lydia felt the SCITT programme prepared her well for starting her first teaching job.

What were the challenges of training through the SCITT programme?

Lydia emphasised that the course is intense, and expectations are high.



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Being organised is key as the components - academic learning, teaching practice and PGCE assignments all run simultaneously. It's important to be self-motivated to keep up with the work and make the most of the learning opportunities.

Was finance a consideration when applying for the SCITT?

Yes, finance was a consideration. As with all ITT training courses fees apply. There are no bursaries for the Primary pathway which Lydia had applied for.

The personal conversation Lydia had had with the SCITT Director had supported her to understand that this was a finite amount of time and that there was £30,000 starting salary once training was completed.

What advice would you give anyone considering applying to a SCITT programme?

Lydia says:

- Know what you are getting into. This is for teaching in general but also be clear about the structure of the SCITT course and whether the structure will work for your personal circumstances.
- Get some experience working in a school, either in a paid or voluntary role.
- Understand the commitment that is needed for the training and beyond.

If your school wants to get more involved in ITT by hosting placements and working with an accredited ITE provider, you can access 19 providers across the West Midlands by completing our Get Involved tool: [ITT Partnerships | Get Involved](#)



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Case Study - Flexible Working at Harborne Academy

We met with Sarah Ross, Headteacher of Harborne Academy - a single academy trust in Birmingham, to talk about recruitment, retention and the power of flexible working in schools. From the outset of our conversation, it was clear that Sarah has a strong philosophy about what it means to run a school and how the attitudes and decisions of a headteacher influence culture and staff satisfaction.



Sarah is passionate about one key concept, that 'trust is the thing' that makes the whole culture work. In many ways Sarah's ideas are innovative but not revolutionary. Put simply, at Harborne Academy, Sarah wants 'the students in school for as long as possible and staff for as short as possible if that helps them to achieve a good work life balance'. For many schools and leaders this might feel a little alarming, but Sarah is committed to the approach and says she has felt the benefits by keeping great teachers in her team, indeed she claims that 'many staff who leave this school get in touch saying that they wish they could come back.'

Running through all the flexible working and retention measures Sarah explained to us is a simple principle - school life doesn't need to be inflexible for teachers, if headteachers and schools are willing to meet staff halfway: 'Some of our staff are prepared to work early in the morning, whereas others are prepared to stay late - I don't understand why the time teachers spend in the building has to be so fixed, particularly the start time.' The rigidity of school timetables and expectations on staff are often cited as a barrier to part time work or to the recruitment and retention of teachers who are also parents or carers.

Sarah explained some of the measures that are in place in detail:

At Harborne Academy, 'All staff can go to all their kids' events - teachers are parents too and you can't underestimate the benefit staff feel when they are able to attend their child's nativity play.' Often, Sarah uses dependants' leave to facilitate but as the culture has evolved staff increasingly use friendly cover, 'which we advertise, support and encourage people to take advantage.'

The school is trialling a new system, whereby every teacher gets the chance to spend 'one PPA period a week at home, either in the morning or in the afternoon'. This is a fairly novel initiative, and Sarah plans to review its benefits and impact in the Summer Term.

Colleagues are also entitled to one 'Staff Day' each academic year, which is 'one day off per year,' and the school asks for 'half a term's notice and in return Staff



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can choose the day they take'. Sarah tells us that this has far-reaching benefits. These strategies in and of themselves feel like a bonus and promote a positive, supportive environment across the school.

Sarah says this philosophy has had a positive impact on staff absence, attendance and the overall culture of the school: 'Staff with poor attendance are going to have poor attendance no matter what you do, why should the rules be inflexible for everyone in school to address issues with a small proportion off your staff?' There is always a concern for heads and cover managers that these arrangements leave them vulnerable in emergency circumstances: 'I don't really see it that way, this approach is mostly focused on wellbeing for main-scale staff. They can always leave when they have flexibility because they are never used for cover.'

'In fact, it enables me to focus more of my attention of the staff who do have attendance issues than I was able to under the old model.'

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Case Study: A New Career in Teaching

Not everyone enters the teaching profession straight from school. Some people have successful careers in other professions before deciding to train as a teacher.

Think about your school and the community around it. There will be talented, intelligent committed people who could become excellent teachers. Career changers are one of the biggest untapped recruitment sources in this country. Consider how your school could support someone to make the best transition into teaching possible.

At school, Naomi had always planned to train as either a nurse or a teacher. As a teenager, she completed a short placement in a school but at the time decided this was not for her. She trained as a nurse, and during her career completed a Specialist Nursing Degree in District Nursing. She dedicated 17 years to the nursing profession but increasingly felt that she wanted to re-consider a career in teaching. Other members of Naomi's family were teachers, and she enjoyed supporting them in their work when she was able to.

Here is Naomi's journey.

Whilst on maternity leave, Naomi made the decision to change career and investigate routes into teaching. She also took the opportunity to volunteer in a school to gain some first-hand experience.

Choosing a course

Initially, Naomi was unsure how to go about applying and the variety of options seemed confusing.

Naomi attended open days at different universities. She spoke to people in the teaching profession, including the Head Teacher of her children's school to identify the best route into teaching for her. Naomi realised that because she had a degree through her nursing career, she was eligible to apply for a one-year course. At the time, she felt she was unlikely to be accepted onto a salaried course and so opted for a university course with PGCE.

Benefits (and challenges) of training later in life

Naomi felt that undertaking teacher training as a mature student had specific benefits. She had to be very sure starting a training course was the right thing to do as there were other factors to consider, such as family and finance. In making the decision, she therefore felt a high level of commitment to completing the course to the highest possible standards.



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As a mature trainee, Naomi had a great deal of life and work experience to bring, allowing her to see situations from different perspectives. Naomi found the most challenging aspect of the course was keeping up with the work requirements while continuing to meet the expectations of family life. Organisation was key.

Worries before making the change

Naomi said that her biggest concern about changing career, was that after completing the training, she wouldn't enjoy the job! She admitted that the first few weeks of her teaching career were very challenging. She worked long hours and was worried that she would not be able to maintain this and meet the demands of family life. Establishing an appropriate work/life balance was important. Naomi says that this is an on-going challenge but has improved significantly.

Finance as a mature student

Finance was a big consideration. Not only was Naomi giving up a salary, but she also had a student loan for the course fees and maintenance grant. She wasn't eligible for any benefits to help with nursery fees due to her husband's income. Naomi was fortunate that her husband and family were able to support, and she did take on some bank nursing work at weekends but admitted it wasn't easy.

However, Naomi did point out that this was for a finite period and that now in her 5th year of teaching, she earns more than she did after 17 years of nursing.

The best bits

Naomi loves seeing children enjoying their learning and developing their confidence. She enjoys the positive relationships she develops with pupils and watching their personalities grow. Most of all, Naomi loves those 'lightbulb' moments, when children understand a new concept or grasp a new skill!

Naomi loves her job and knows she made the right decision to change career. She acknowledges that there are challenges but feels that teaching provides her with a range of opportunities and support.

Advice for career changers

- Do your research!
- Volunteer and spend some time in a school so that you are clear about what the job involves.
- Ask questions. Where you don't understand something, seek clarification.
- Look at the different routes into teaching, so that you can make informed decisions about which route is most suitable. Don't be afraid to apply for



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different routes if you believe they will work for you and your circumstances.

- Be clear on how you will fund the time you are training.

Good News Stories - Craig

Craig, Head of Year and PE teacher at Bishop Walsh Catholic School in Sutton Coldfield, shares his journey and insights into what makes teaching a great job.

My journey into teaching is a story of career change, personal growth, and finding balance between professional and family life. Transitioning into teaching was a deliberate decision to align my skills, knowledge, and passions with a career that allowed me to make a meaningful impact on young people. Coming from a background in coaching, scouting, and performance analysis in football, I recognised that my strengths were well-suited to working in a secondary school environment.



Arthur Terry
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During my training year with the Arthur Terry SCITT, I faced the additional challenge—and joy—of starting a young family. This period demanded dedication, resilience, and effective time management, but it also reinforced my belief that teaching was the right career for me. The training I received was exceptional, equipping me with the tools and confidence to succeed in the classroom from day one. It also allowed me to balance my passion for education with quality time for my growing family.

Since completing my training, my career has progressed quickly. My training year prepared me to excel as an Early Career Teacher, and by my ECT2 year, I had gained the skills, confidence, and experience to take on additional responsibilities. In September 2024, I was offered the position of Head of Year in a thriving school—an opportunity that was both a testament to my hard work and a reflection of the support and foundation provided during my training journey.

This story highlights not only the transformative power of teacher training but also the possibilities for career changers to bring their unique experiences into education. It's a journey that showcases the rewards of teaching—helping pupils succeed while achieving a fulfilling work-life balance. Teaching has allowed me to combine my love for working with young people with the ability to grow professionally and personally alongside my family.

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your journey to this point?



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With a background in coaching, scouting, and performance analysis in football, my career has been shaped by two key passions: a love for sport and a dedication to working with young people. Transitioning into teaching physical education was a natural progression, and since making that decision, I haven't looked back.

In 2021, I took a significant step by enrolling in the Arthur Terry SCITT program. Prior to this, I had completed a BSc in Sport and Exercise Science and a master's degree in Sport and Exercise Science (Performance Analysis). The SCITT course exceeded my expectations, providing exceptional training in all aspects of teaching—from pedagogy to behaviour management.

My first teaching role was in a school with a challenging behavioural context. This experience was invaluable, allowing me to find my footing quickly and make a meaningful impact on the school and its pupils. I later transitioned to a position closer to home in a high-achieving school. Working in these contrasting environments deepened my understanding of education and gave me immense job satisfaction and professional growth in both settings.

In September 2023, I joined my current school as an ECT2. Shortly after, an opportunity arose for a Head of Year position. While I had confidence in my abilities, I initially hesitated, feeling that my experience might not yet measure up. Nevertheless, I applied, viewing it as a chance to gain interview and application experience. To my delight, I was offered the role and began my tenure as Head of Year alongside teaching physical education in September 2024.

This journey has been both rewarding and enriching, and I am excited to continue making a positive impact on the lives of young people.

What positive experiences have you had?

Working with young people is both a privilege and a profound responsibility, and it has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my career. The opportunity to inspire and shape the next generation is a truly unique position to hold. There is no greater feeling than seeing the impact of your work come to life—whether it's through a pupil overcoming challenges or achieving their goals.

One of the most fulfilling experiences has been supporting pupils who need additional help and watching them grow in confidence and ability. Whether it's guiding a pupil through a difficult time or helping them find a passion for physical education, seeing their development is incredibly gratifying. Similarly, witnessing students' reactions when they surpass their own expectations in their GCSEs or A-levels is a moment of pure joy, not just for them but for me as an educator.

Joining the teaching profession has also been a personal journey of growth and learning. From my initial training on the Arthur Terry SCITT program, where I



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gained invaluable skills in pedagogy and behaviour management, to stepping into roles of increasing responsibility, every stage has reinforced my passion for teaching. Working in contrasting schools—a behaviourally challenging environment and a high-achieving institution—has broadened my perspective and strengthened my ability to adapt and connect with pupils from diverse backgrounds. These experiences have not only shaped me as a teacher but also reaffirmed why teaching is such a rewarding career. It's about more than just imparting knowledge; it's about making a meaningful difference in the lives of young people and helping them realize their potential.

How has your journey benefitted you and given you opportunities?

My journey into teaching has been transformative, equipping me with both theoretical knowledge and practical experience that have shaped me into the educator I am today. While understanding the theory behind teaching is essential, the real learning begins when applying it in the classroom. By reflecting on the "why" behind my actions and ensuring that every decision in my lessons is meaningful for my pupils, I have developed a deeper understanding of pedagogy and its impact.

This reflective and intentional approach has allowed me to build a strong foundation in my teaching practice. My passion for continuous improvement and striving to be the best I can be has not only benefited my pupils but also opened doors for professional growth. Being able to confidently articulate my teaching methods, supported by both experience and educational theory, has set me apart. When you speak passionately and knowledgeably about why you do what you do, people take notice.

This was particularly evident when I joined my current school as an ECT2 in 2023. Within a year, an opportunity arose to apply for a Head of Year role. While I initially doubted my readiness due to limited experience, my demonstrated commitment to my craft, along with my ability to connect theory with practice, positioned me as a strong candidate. I was honoured to be offered the position, beginning this new role in September 2024.

Through my journey, I have also had the privilege of working in two contrasting schools—a behaviourally challenging environment and an excellent institution. These experiences provided me with a broad perspective on education and the adaptability to thrive in diverse settings. They also enhanced my ability to address challenges confidently and build strong relationships with pupils and colleagues alike.

Ultimately, my journey has taught me the importance of passion, reflection, and perseverance. These qualities have not only enriched my teaching but have also

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created opportunities to grow professionally and take on leadership responsibilities earlier in my career than I ever anticipated.

What advice would you give to someone hoping to follow a similar path?

Embarking on a career in teaching is an incredibly rewarding journey, but it requires dedication, adaptability, and a willingness to continually grow:

1. Embrace Mistakes as Learning Opportunities:

Don't be afraid to make mistakes, especially during your training year. The classroom is a dynamic environment, and every experience—whether successful or not—offers valuable lessons. Be fearless in trying new techniques and approaches. Some will work brilliantly, others may not, but each will bring you closer to understanding what works best for you and your pupils.

2. Be Reflective and Flexible:

Reflect on your practice constantly. One strategy may resonate with one group of pupils and fall flat with another. Recognizing these differences and adjusting your approach is key to growth and success as a teacher.

3. Learn from Others:

Use your free periods to observe as many lessons as you can, across different subjects and year groups. Watching experienced teachers in action will provide insights into diverse teaching styles, classroom management techniques, and methods for engaging students. Don't hesitate to ask questions and seek advice—teaching is a collaborative profession, and there's always someone willing to help.

4. Reach Out for Support:

Teaching can be challenging at times, but you don't have to navigate it alone. If you encounter difficulties, whether with a particular pupil, lesson planning, or classroom management, reach out for support. From mentors to colleagues, there's a wealth of experience around you to draw from.

5. Commit to Lifelong Learning:

One of the most rewarding aspects of teaching is that you never stop learning. Every class, every pupil, and every school brings new experiences. By remaining open to learning from others and incorporating new ideas into your practice, you'll continue to evolve as an educator.

Reflecting on my own journey—from coaching, scouting, and performance analysis in football to completing my training through the Arthur Terry SCITT program and stepping into teaching roles—I've learned the importance of perseverance and adaptability. Experiencing contrasting school environments,



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both challenging and high-achieving, has significantly shaped my approach to teaching and broadened my understanding of how to meet diverse pupil needs.

Teaching is not just a job; it's a vocation that allows you to inspire, guide, and support young people in reaching their potential. If you are passionate about making a difference, stay committed to your journey, and be open to the incredible opportunities it brings.

We want to help you and your school **attract and retain the best possible teachers**, and to maximise the resources in your school.

With that in mind, we have developed an **online audit tool** for all schools to use for free.

The audit tool **makes suggestions** about which actions might be higher priority for your school and **guides you** to the most relevant areas of the toolkit.

[Recruitment and Retention Audit Tool.](#)

We **strongly recommend** that schools complete the audit as a **first step**, to ensure you get the most out of this toolkit.



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Good News Stories - Hannah

Hannah, Head of Music and writing lead at Brookvale Primary School in Erdington, shares her personal journey into teaching.



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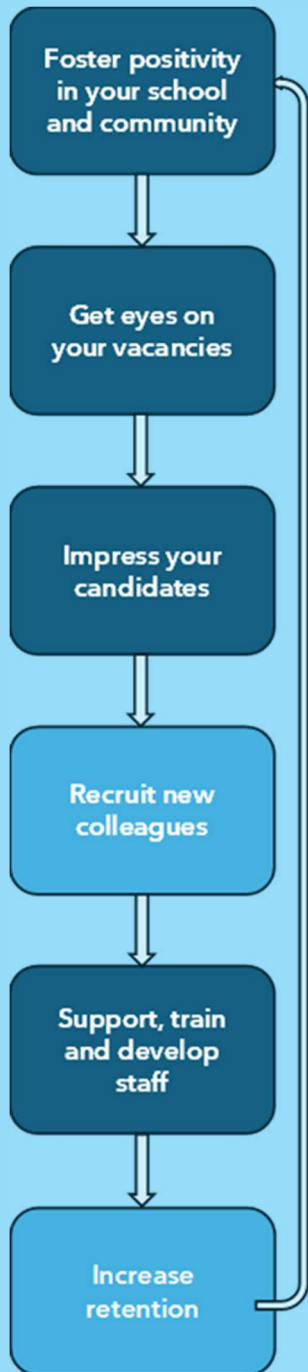
Since I can remember, I wanted to get into teaching. An inspiring factor of this for me, was the excellent teachers that I encountered through my school experience, particularly the ones that encouraged me to follow my dreams and recognise that nothing is impossible with hard work and dedication. After my drama degree, I decided to join the Arthur Terry SCITT. Having no experience in teaching prior to this point, the prospect of joining a school felt daunting but my learning coaches and the learning sessions soon instilled a newfound knowledge and confidence in me. Being placed in a school four days a week, meant that the learning began instantly and there was always a relation between theory and practice from the training sessions. It left no time to wonder about the relevance but gave the opportunity to trial, practice and discover my own teaching style very quickly. Three years on from this experience, I have become a TLR for writing within my one form entry school, as well as becoming head of music which enables me to combine my passion for the arts with my teaching career as I lead the school choir at 'Young Voices and the carol concerts termly for our school.

What makes teaching great?

Joining teaching was the best decision that I have made. One phrase that is embedded into my mind since training on the SCITT program is 'you create the weather in your classroom' and this is a phrase that has shaped my practice and the way that I view myself as a teacher. Working in a deprived, inner city school, I have had the chance to become an agent of inspiration and positivity for the children. I have been able to broaden their cultural capital with organizing trips such as to Stone Henge or the theatre. I pride myself on securing a rapport with the children, so they feel safe, seen and start to find an enjoyment in school even if this is not through academic study but through joining my school choir or attending rehearsals for up-and-coming performance instead. The Arthur Terry SCITT provided a vast and wide training of subjects such as music and art with specialists from partnership schools and the opportunity to visit their schools to see this in practice.

Benefits and opportunities

Since joining teaching, I have discovered a passion for writing which led to my appointment as the school writing lead. This has given me the chance to attend



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partnership writing quality circles and up-level my knowledge and skill. I have also gained management experience from this, having to deliver staff CPD, complete learning walks and book looks for our school to enrich practice. As a third-year teacher, I never imagined such a position would be possible so soon, but the skills acquired over my training and ECT years have prepared me for this role. I have also completed my mentor qualification for the SCITT, meaning that I am qualified to give back to fellow teacher trainees and associate teachers, passing on the knowledge, support and encouragement that I received to the next generation of teachers.

Every other year, we attend staff conferences with guest speakers who inspire and motivate us as practitioners, opening our mind to the possibilities of teaching and broadening our own personal mindsets.

Advice for future teachers

Although it can feel daunting getting into teaching and the workload brings with it challenges, find your 'why'. Think about the reasons you wish to become a teacher and the changes you aspire to facilitate. Whenever things feel pressured, know that nobody is truly an expert in anything and education is continually changing and adapting so it is okay to ask for help and be open to utilising the skill set of those around you as you discover your own teaching style and become the teacher you wish to be.

Want to improve your school's recruitment success by getting more involved in ITT? Let us help you to find the right provider for you:

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Good News Stories - Nicola

Nicola - Phonics and Early Reading Lead at Little Sutton Primary School - made the bold decision to take up teacher training at 45, after working in early year settings and training as a Teaching Assistant. Her story is a fantastic example of how engagement with teacher training can enable schools to recruit high-quality teachers and leaders from sometimes unexpected sources.

I came to teacher training later in life at the age of 45, having spent a number of years working part-time in early childcare settings as my family grew up. It was while completing my Teaching Assistant NPQ Level 3 at a local school that I was lucky enough to be placed in the class of an inspirational teacher who encouraged me to apply for teacher training. After quite a few years out of the formal workplace, I didn't have much confidence, but I decided to give it a go, not thinking I would pass the interview to get onto my local SCITT!

My placements at two wonderful primary schools were thoroughly enjoyable and I loved them both. Again, I was extremely fortunate to be placed with professional, dedicated and inspirational teachers who cemented my growing resolution that this new career path was the right one for me. I was successful in securing a teaching post at one of these schools and have subsequently taught in Year 3, Reception and Year 1.

After developing a passion for teaching phonics and early reading alongside a keen life-long interest in reading for pleasure, I became the Phonics and Early Reading Lead at the school. As a result of this role, I now also work as a Literacy Specialist for our English Hub, supporting other schools with their developing early reading practice and providing training for staff focused on identifying and meeting the needs of children with SEND to reach their potential.

Positive experiences and benefits

- Development of professional relationships and working as part of a dedicated, enthusiastic team both within the school and the English Hub - we really do feel like a big, extended family!
- Excellent professional development opportunities at school, local and national level due to my role and involvement with the English Hub.



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- The opportunity to be involved in action-based research that shapes national and regional educational strategies as well as being involved in the Arthur Terry SCITT.
- The ability to network with other educators in local schools and learn from them to improve my own practice.
- The knowledge that my work contributes towards setting up children to become life-long learners, able to access and enjoy the full curriculum offer, not only in my own school but across the region.
- Celebrating the joy that small achievements can make in a child's life - teaching early reading really is rewarding and a privilege. The same can also be said for parents who speak English as an additional language, many of whom are learning to read English at the same time as their children.
- Time flies by - no two days are the same and you are always on your toes.

Advice for future teachers

Work hard and be passionate. It rarely goes unnoticed.

Ask for advice if you are struggling or require support with something. You will have a wealth of experience at your fingertips in your school and someone will have encountered the same thing before.

Find out what really ignites your interest and passion. Is there a particular area you would like to focus on development wise? Seek out lead practitioners in your placement schools and explore the possibility of shadowing them. Use networking opportunities to build your expertise and connections. Volunteer for training opportunities and investigate CPD provided through national literacy organisations, many of which offer great online courses - some for free.

Build your knowledge and expertise of children's literature. There are a variety of great educational and publishing blogs and websites you can follow. Think about how you can develop reading for pleasure in your classroom.

Teaching is hard work. Look after your mental health and physical wellbeing, including prioritising sleep! Make time for friends and family - they are your biggest supporters.

Do not underestimate the impact that a fresh pair of eyes and your life experience (however old you are) can bring to the profession. Whatever your background, you will have something valuable to offer and the opportunity to pass on your own passions and knowledge to the next generation. Have confidence in your abilities.

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If you feel that the setting is not right for you - you probably haven't found the right school. Do not give up! The right place and the right team are out there waiting for you.

Good News Stories - Stacey

Stacey is now a teacher and SEND champion at Two Gates Primary School, having worked with special needs children throughout her adult life. Her story showcases how support from the dedicated leaders in School Centred Initial Teacher Training can lay the foundation for a stable, successful career.

My career in education and SEND began at the young age of 18, working as a voluntary playworker alongside children with autism. Following the birth of my son, I decided to channel my passion for education in SEND and whilst studying for my initial qualifications, worked within many different special schools all over the West Midlands as a teaching assistant.



I gained a wealth of experience as an agency worker, juggling family life and finding time to study - which wasn't always easy with a toddler! As a qualified teaching assistant, I felt my journey was incomplete and applied for a newly introduced BA Degree at Newman University (Solihull College Campus.) Within the three years of day-release study, I gained employment at a primary school in Tamworth, where I worked closely with the school SENCO, delivering interventions to pupils with SEND and EAL.

It was here that I was so very fortunate to not only meet, but also work as a teaching assistant alongside Jane Embleton, who was - and has continued to be - my absolute cheerleader in my success in gaining QTS. Jane spent two long years encouraging me to enroll on the Arthur Terry SCITT, but due to a lack of self-confidence and apprehensions around family and work-life balance, I was initially skeptical! However, with Jane's persistence and an initial interview into the SCITT, which was a relaxed and supportive environment, I agreed! Five years later, here I am!

What are the positive experiences that you have had (either in joining teaching or recruiting new teachers)?

- Teaching is NEVER boring - every single day is different! Different challenges, different successes.
- It is the most exhaustively rewarding role you will ever experience!



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- Every day is a school day...literally! I learn something new about or with my children hourly.
- Teaching keeps you young and in tune with the next generation!
- You become part of an amazing family of staff who walk down the corridor and make statements that you know for a fact, outside of those walls, no one else would have clue about!

How has your journey benefitted you and given you opportunities?

Teaching has provided me with stability and consistency, with the right team of awesome teachers and support staff around me. It has allowed me to bring together all of my prior working experience and knowledge around SEND to ensure an inclusive and thriving classroom environment for all pupils in my care. I have been fortunate enough to develop leadership skills in realms that I did not feel I possessed the requirements for and as a result, have found a new self-confidence in continuing my ambition to further my career in education. My role has taken me to depth within specific subjects, the opportunity to support staff in developing a successful curriculum in my subject area, reducing workload from experience, in addition to supporting in the training of a SCITT student who has also successfully continued her career in the ATLP.

What advice or recommendations would you give to someone hoping to follow a similar path?

- Pace yourself and prioritise! Easier said than done, but by simply being in that classroom as a consistent role model, for some of those children you are the world! I learned very early on that you do not need to be a superhero to be the teacher those children need and deserve.
- Do not succumb to social media negativity! Create your own story! You will hear many state "You only teach for the holidays!" And, quite rightly so, they are a perk to the job! But I could write a very lengthy book of events that would swiftly change their minds on this opinion!
- Volunteer or visit numerous schools of differing locations, specialisms, local authorities where possible - you will know which is right for you the second you step foot through the door.
- Prepare to become a member of a 30+ family...it is inevitable!



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Good News Stories – Julia

Julia, in the second year of her Early Career Training, shares what it's like to go through the Initial Teacher Training year and transitioning into your first teaching position.

I am currently an ECT at the Royal Sutton School, teaching PE, following the completion of my PGCE through the Arthur Terry SCITT last year. Before starting my PGCE I had always had a passion for both sport and inspiring and motivating others. The PGCE allowed me to go into a career involving the two.



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Positive Experiences

During my training there were a lot of positive experiences, one of which was the subject specific training days that allowed us to develop our own subject knowledge. We had days focused on areas that may have been a weakness for us or areas that are not necessarily covered as much in the placements. This included sessions looking at, GCSE moderation, outdoor adventurous activity, gymnastics, and alternative provision. These sessions made me feel a lot more confident about those areas. Having accepted a job at a school within the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership, following the completion of my PGCE I underwent a 2-week induction in my new school at the end of the summer term. I found this experience positive as it helped with the transition to a new school and made starting in September a lot easier.

How has your journey benefitted you and given you opportunities?

My teacher training journey ensured that I was fully prepared for a career in teaching. I underwent placements at two contrasting schools which gave me the opportunity to teach in different school settings. I had support throughout from both my mentors at the placement schools as well as those in the ATLP, which allowed me to develop and progress as a teacher as I went through the year. Through doing the course, an opportunity to work at a school within the trust came about, which led me to teaching at the Royal Sutton School, which I am really enjoying.

What advice or recommendations would you give to someone hoping to follow a similar path?

The advice I would give to someone on a similar path is to not be afraid to ask questions, everyone, either within the ATLP SCITT team or your mentors at your placement schools, is there to help you progress and develop, so ask questions.



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Good News Stories – Testimonials

*These testimonials range from the experiences of trainee teachers in different contexts and from different routes into teaching, to senior leaders and executives sharing the recruitment benefits they have felt from engaging in ITT. **Use them to promote teacher training and for insights into the different options that exist, for future teachers.***

If your school wants to get more involved in ITT by hosting placements and working with an accredited ITE provider, you can access 19 providers across the West Midlands by completing our Get Involved tool: [ITT Partnerships | Get Involved](#)

Assessment Only Route – Harborne Academy

*Assessment Only QTS is a great way to support your experienced unqualified teachers or other suitably experienced and expert staff to become fully qualified. It is a much **shorter form of teacher training**. It leads candidates to the point of being an Early Career Teacher economically and efficiently. It can be transformative for the individual teacher and can support schools to **recruit from within**.*

When I joined Harborne Academy, I started as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA), supporting in classrooms and covering lessons, primarily in the English department. Before this I had worked as a drama teacher at a secondary school in Malaysia where they do not require a teaching degree. During the time that I was working as a GTA, I was asked to take on a long-term cover teaching role, which I gladly accepted as I was developing a passion for teaching. This experience confirmed my desire to pursue a teaching career.

After discussing options with my line manager, we discovered the Assessment Only (AO) Route to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Since I had prior teaching experience at another school, I was eligible to apply. The 12-week course involved weekly observations by my school mentor, who provided feedback on successes, areas for improvement, and strategies for development. Once a half term, a mentor from BCU joined to observe my lessons, review my reflections, and assess my progress.

This route worked well for me as it allowed me to continue working full-time while advancing my career. The regular feedback and short course duration helped me focus on my growth as a teacher without the need to take time off which is needed for other training routes like Teach First or a PGCE. I am especially grateful to the school for covering the course costs, they didn't ask for anything



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from me in return and that level of support was there throughout my time on the course and during my time as an ECT.

Recruitment and Retention Strategies - A Trust leader's perspective

Like all strategies, making gains in recruitment and retention requires clarity of vision, careful co-ordination and a connection to school and trust priorities. A trust leader has shared their insights into what has worked for them, starting with ITT and developing to encompass their whole school approach. This is a fantastic model to emulate when building and fostering a positive school culture.

Providing placements for the SCITT trainees in a variety of schools across the MAT, leads to recruitment of ECTs that have been trained from the very beginning with us. This is a win-win - the trainees feel valued, and our schools get ECTs who know and understand the teaching and learning principles of the MAT.

How the Trust supports retention of teachers we provide:

- ECTs then have opportunities to observe practice across the Trust.
- New recruits that join us including ECTS receive a MAT induction so they hear about all the support and opportunities they can access as part of our family of schools - for example the opportunity to develop as a specialist practitioner across our Trust bringing career progression and secondment opportunities, enabling them to grow professionally across a range of settings.
- A Mentoring programme for all staff to support teaching and learning development.
- Coaching - additional layer of pure coaching to support well-being.
- VIVUP - wellbeing platform that provides 1-1 personal coaching session, doctors' appointments, and a range of discounts across many stores.
- Provide an annual whole Trust conference with world class guest speakers and a wide range of evidence-based workshops for staff to select from that will help them gain knowledge in areas they are interested in.
- An annual MAT awards evening so staff feel part of the wider family and appreciated for their hard work and dedication.



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- We provide suite of networks where best practice is disseminated. These include EYFS/ safeguarding/ attendance/ all curriculum areas.
- Trust CPD opportunities
- A range of digital resources and opportunities to collaborate - video clips of great practice, digital writing portfolio, shared planning models to reduce workload.
- A MAT curriculum providing well sequenced curriculum planning to reduce workload.
- Regular surveying of staff to take feedback and support well-being, workload.

Research Schools

Our partners in Research Schools and the wider education research community are regularly exploring what works and what doesn't to find and keep the best possible colleagues.

For a more evidence-driven perspective, read this article from our partners at Billesley Research School:

[Turning the Tide on the Teacher Retention... | Billesley Research School](#)

You can view and download all our short form testimonials on our website:

<https://arthurterryteachingschool.atlp.org.uk/good-news-stories-itt-short-testimonials/>



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SCITT Physical Education - West Coventry Academy

One of the key options schools must explore to improve recruitment is to be involved in school centred teacher training, or SCITT. This usually involves offering longer placements, hosting trainee teachers at your school for a term or more. Providers are generally flexible and will be glad to receive offers of placements in any subject, phase or specialism - if they run a suitable course.

I love sport and have played from an early age. Unfortunately, becoming a professional athlete became unrealistic. However, teaching has provided me with the opportunity to have a fantastic career and, with its subject specific nature, a career which allows me to continue my passion for sport everyday.



After A levels I went to university and got a first-class honours degree in Sport and Exercise Science. I followed this with my teacher training last academic year with the Arthur Terry SCITT and, once qualified, got a job at West Coventry Academy, staying within the ATLP.

My teacher training year was fantastic. After three years studying for a degree at university, the school centered approach of the SCITT course provided a break from lectured education and was ideal in gaining invaluable hands-on experience. I learned a wealth of knowledge during the year because of the excellent provision in place in the form of a learning coach on placement and an incredibly knowledgeable subject specific pedagogy lead.

My main placement was at The Coleshill School, which was an amazing experience. Not only my learning coaches but the whole PE department gave such positive and detailed feedback. They were all incredible teachers and more importantly great people who were so welcoming, making me feel part of the department from the start. It felt like they really valued me being there as one of the team, giving me responsibility and the correct level of independence allowing me to be perceived as a normal teacher by the students and myself alike.

My teacher training journey supplied me with the necessary skills to excel in my job as a qualified teacher. Additionally, obtaining this job was aided greatly by the excellent application process for Arthur Terry SCITT trainees looking to remain within the ATLP.



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Career Changer – William MacGregor Primary School

Changing careers is a major life step. It can be reassuring for candidates to know they will be supported and trained through the transition.

After my psychology degree at university, I became an occupational therapy assistant working with the elderly. It was in this job that I realised I wanted to help aid people at the start of their life journey and inspire the next generation to achieve their full potential and be the best they can be.

I therefore joined Arthur Terry SCITT in September 2021 to train as a primary school teacher. Having only had experience of working with primary-aged children through volunteering during my own school years with scouting and local primary schools, this meant that by jumping straight into the teaching profession was a big risk, but one that I am so glad I have taken.

The training year was jam-packed, full of on-the-job learning, which I think is the best way to learn. Being thrown straight into teaching a class was daunting but with the expertise of my amazing learning coach, I learnt so much more than I could have imagined. Through weekly observations, feedback sessions and specific targets set each week, me and my learning coach were able to reflect and this enabled me to keep improving to be the best I could be. This weekly reflection continued into my 2 years of ECT (early career teacher) where I was lucky enough to continue my development journey with the same learning coach who I owe so much of my knowledge to.

I am now in my third year of my teaching journey, having taught in Year 4 and Year 6. I have definitely been through tough times and long hours with the classes I have taught, but I have also experienced the rewarding highs of seeing your class enjoy learning and be proud of themselves for the things they have achieved. Seeing the smiles and joy on children's faces everyday, and the laughs and giggles between friends, really does make your day and is what teaching is all about. I have also had the opportunity to incorporate my love of music into my profession, leading choirs and music opportunities within school, something that again always puts a smile on my face.

One thing that has really helped push me through the teaching profession is the amazing group of staff I work with who are always on hand to support and share experiences with. Only teachers really understand what it is like to live the life of a teacher and having colleagues you know you can rely on everyday that have the same life values really does make a huge positive difference in a profession that is so full-on.



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Teaching is a vocation and does require lots of time and energy from you, but ultimately the little positive moments the children provide you every single day are what the profession is all about.

We want to help you and your school **attract and retain the best possible teachers**, and to maximise the resources in your school.

With that in mind, we have developed an **online audit tool** for all schools to use for free.

The audit tool **makes suggestions** about which actions might be higher priority for your school and **guides you** to the most relevant areas of the toolkit.

[Recruitment and Retention Audit Tool.](#)

We **strongly recommend** that schools complete the audit as a **first step**, to ensure you get the most out of this toolkit.

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