

# Evaluation of the Induction Programme for Beginning Teachers

November 2011

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In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In the spring term 2011, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) undertook an evaluation of the Induction programme provided by the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS) for beginning teachers.

The evaluation follows the self-evaluation and inspection of the four Bachelor of Education and the seven Post-Graduate Certificate of Education programmes in Northern Ireland, which were conducted in the academic years 2008-10<sup>1</sup>.

The ETI's evaluative commentary *The Language of Learning*,<sup>2</sup> based on the inspection reports of the initial teacher education programmes, identified the following outcome:

*The findings outlined here have implications for **the relationship between ITE** (initial teacher education) **providers and the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS)** in order to ensure that effective continuity and progression from the initial, to the early teacher education stages, is provided for each student, based on their individual portfolio of needs. There is a need to provide support for the teacher, as an individual, to continue to improve as an effective, adaptable practitioner, not only within, but beyond the classroom. (Page 7)*

While investigating the outcome identified, this evaluation also follows on from the findings of the ETI survey inspection into the Induction and Early Professional Development of Beginning Teachers (2002-04)<sup>3</sup>.

1.2 In the period since 2004, there have been a number of significant changes:

- the Teacher Education Review remains in progress;
- the Teacher Education Partnership is in abeyance in the Induction phase, in that the ITE providers (four of whom receive £100,000 a year collectively from the Department of Education (DE) for teacher-tutor development) are not engaged directly in the Induction phase;
- the number of students entering ITE has been reduced by almost 25%, from 880 in 2004/05 to 663 in 2010/11;
- only 22% of teachers who graduated from institutions here in 2010, and registered with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTC NI), have obtained a teaching post of a permanent or significant temporary (one term at least) nature, and
- of the 8,012 individuals that graduated as teacher at some point between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004 and today, 53% (4,244) do not currently hold a significant job record as defined within the GTC NI Digest of Statistics;<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For details See the individual inspection reports on:

<http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/inspection-reports/inspection-reports-higher-education-initial-teacher-education.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/surveys-evaluations/surveys-evaluations-higher-education-initial-teacher-education/surveys-evaluations-higher-education-initial-teacher-education-2011/the-language-of-learning-how-student-teachers-learn-through-initial-teacher-education-to-develop-and-promote-literacy-and-numeracy-for-all-learners.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/surveys-evaluations/surveys-evaluations-higher-education-initial-teacher-education/surveys-evaluations-higher-education-initial-teacher-education-2011/the-language-of-learning-how-student-teachers-learn-through-initial-teacher-education-to-develop-and-promote-literacy-and-numeracy-for-all-learners.htm>

- of the 4,449 individuals that graduated as teacher at some point between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004 and today, trained in Northern Ireland and are currently registered with GTC NI, 29% (1,298) have no employment data of any type held on the Register of Teachers; and
- as a result of an ongoing voluntary severance programme, there was, during the course of the survey, a significant reduction in the number of CASS officers who lead and support the Induction programme.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 In the course of the evaluation, inspectors visited 29 schools (see Appendix 1), where they held discussions with 51 beginning teachers only six (12%) of whom were in full-time employment, the remainder being on short-term contracts, and observed 38 lessons across a range of subject areas. They also spoke to principals, teacher-tutors, and other teachers identified by the school as playing a key role in supporting beginning teachers on induction, and attended five centre-based CASS Induction courses for beginning teachers.

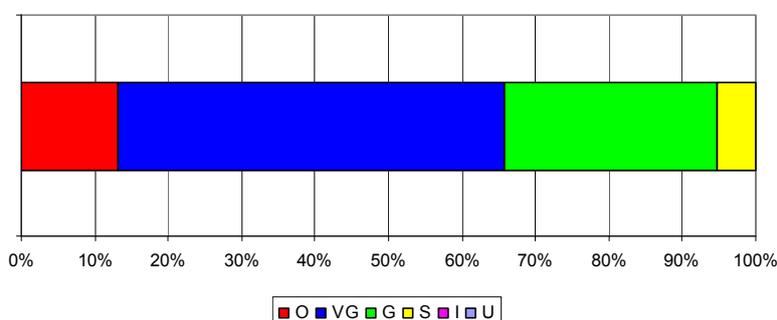
2.2 The evaluation report contains some illustrative extracts (in drop-out boxes) from the notes of visits made by the inspectors to schools and courses.

2.3 Inspectors met with the Inter-Board Group responsible for the CASS Beginning Teacher Induction Programme, and with the Assistant Education Officers from four of the Education and Library Boards to discuss their various roles and responsibilities within the programme, their evaluation of the work done to date and further planned developments; and also with members of the GTC NI and with DE officers with responsibility for Teacher Education.

## 3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BEGINNING TEACHERS AS A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

### KEY FINDINGS

- The quality of the teaching observed was almost all good, and 66% of lessons (see Figure 1), was very good or better, which is a stronger finding than that reported in 2004.
- The quality of the teacher as a reflective practitioner was similarly strong.



**Figure 1: Quality of teaching observed<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>4</sup> A significant job record as defined within the GTC NI 'Digest of Statistics' means the individual teacher was employed as a teacher in an NI grant-aided school for a period of one term or more at the time the school submitted its annual data return to the Council (October to December).

<sup>5</sup> O – Outstanding; VG – Very Good; G – Good; S- Satisfactory; I – Inadequate; U - Unsatisfactory

3.1 The beginning teachers observed build effectively on the foundation laid in ITE, are growing in confidence as reflective practitioners and contribute widely to the life and work of the school.

The beginning teachers are making very good progress in shifting the focus from classroom management and resources to the learner and the learning.

This shift is evidenced by the very good quality of their written evaluations of their own teaching and the learning which has, or has not, taken place, their ability to set targets for individual learners and the high level of attention which they give to the pupils' pastoral needs.

They make confident use a range of resources and are prepared well to make good use of information and communication technology (ICT).

On a few occasions, their focus remains on planning for the pupils to complete tasks and more creative approaches to their teaching are underdeveloped.

3.2 There is considerable variation in the quality of, and value placed on, the Career Entry Profile (CEP) by the beginning teachers. The CEP template is not always adapted by some of the teachers to the circumstances of their individual teaching post. In the best instances, the action plans associated with the CEP are personalised once the beginning teacher is in a teaching post, demonstrate a good understanding of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, make appropriate reference to the GTC NI Teaching Competences and are linked clearly to the school development plan.

3.3 The beginning teachers enjoy their work, their approach is mature and they have a good work ethic. They are flexible and adaptable, given the demands of coping with the challenge of providing temporary cover and taking on a full time-table. While the 2004 report recommended a 10% reduction in the timetable for a beginning teacher, schools often do not make this concession and teachers are reluctant to seek any remission.

A beginning teacher on a one year temporary contract in a primary school had previously worked in the school on a short-term cover basis. She discussed her CEP, her experience in the school to date and the current needs of the school with the teacher-tutor. She believed it would be appropriate to link her action plan directly to the whole school priority in relation to developing aspects of reading, with a clear focus on the learner. She is proactive in seeking support and guidance from colleagues and the school ensures an appropriate allocation of time to enable the beginning teacher to take this work forward.

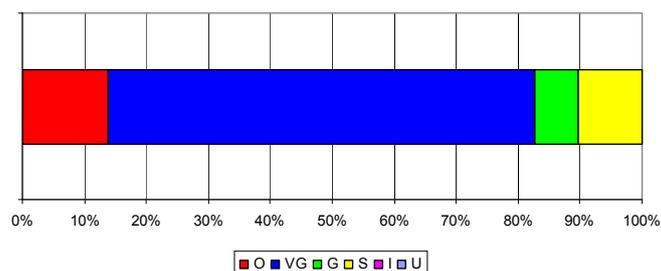
3.4 As well as being able to prioritise their own developmental needs, the beginning teachers are developing the skills to collaborate and reflect with the colleagues who support them (whether teacher-tutor, senior teacher or head of department) and are developing an understanding of evaluation as a collective exercise. In the best practice, they benefit from observing other teachers, both in their own and other areas of the curriculum, working with coordinators and others with specific responsibilities and, in a few instances by making contributions to the staff development programme. In a few instances, schools facilitate teachers on short-term contracts to join school staff for professional development. They develop good working relationships with classroom assistants.

3.5 The beginning teachers are keen to improve on their practice, establishing good professional working relationships within the school and with CASS officers. They actively seek help as required and they express considerable appreciation for the support they receive for induction both from the school and from CASS officers.

#### 4. THE WORK OF THE SCHOOLS IN SUPPORTING BEGINNING TEACHERS ON INDUCTION

##### KEY FINDING

- In around 80% of schools visited, the quality of support provided by the school, through the teacher-tutor, is very good or outstanding (see Figure 2), which is in line with the findings from 2004.



**Figure 2: Quality of the school support for beginning teachers**

4.1 The schools value the work of the beginning teachers, include them in all aspects of school improvement and ensure that they benefit from the schools' staff development programmes.

4.2 In a few instances, the schools demonstrate their moral responsibility by adopting a creatively flexible approach to ensuring that beginning teachers, on short-term contracts in various schools, sometimes across several area learning communities (ALCs), progress through their action plans and complete induction in the course of the year.

4.3 In almost all of the schools visited, the teacher-tutors are very clear about their role and remit and carry out effectively their responsibilities to a high standard. They provide very good pastoral support to the beginning teachers and help to create an appropriate balance between the development needs of the beginning teacher and the school's priorities. The teacher-tutors provide very constructive feedback on teaching observed, which is clearly focused on both the beginning teacher's action plan and the Teaching Competences. In a few instances, the follow-up needed to support a small number of beginning teachers who were less than secure in their teaching, was insufficient in both quality and quantity.

In a post-primary school, induction is deemed to be an ongoing process which will benefit not only to the beginning teacher but also the department, the school and, ultimately, the pupils. At the beginning of the year the teacher-tutor met with the beginning teacher, who is on a one year contract, to share information about the school and the induction process. The teacher-tutor carried out an audit of the needs of new staff to the school and matched the findings against the programme for whole staff development, the school development plan and the relevant departmental action plan. As a consequence, a tailored programme of development for the beginning teacher was drawn up.

4.4 The 2004 inspection report recommended that there should be a minimum of six formal observations of the work of the beginning teacher during the induction year. The evidence from this survey indicates that four observations are more common.

4.5 Teachers show a strong sense of collegiality and commitment to supporting the beginning teachers in their induction. In the best, but infrequent instances, beginning teachers benefit from their more experienced colleagues who share and model their practice. All beginning teachers would benefit from observing lessons taught by other teachers.

4.6 There are very good relationships between teacher-tutors and the CASS induction officers and, in almost all cases, the teacher-tutors report that they benefit from CASS training for their role as professional coaches, as well as for the use of the innovative Teacher e-Portfolio<sup>6</sup>.

The teacher-tutor in a post-primary school, through her contacts with teacher-tutors in neighbouring post-primary schools (some in the same ALC and some outside), informally arranged that the temporary beginning teachers are able to pursue their action plan when teaching in another school and then return to the original school for the action plan to be completed and signed off by the governors of that school.

## **5. THE WORK OF CASS IN SUPPORTING BEGINNING TEACHERS ON INDUCTION**

### **KEY FINDING**

5.1 The quality of the induction courses inspected by ETI was always good; most were outstanding.

5.2 The courses attended by the inspectors covered topics such as: art and design; behaviour management; ICT and The World Around Us; they were well-planned and well-structured. The course facilitators modelled good practice through their teaching strategies, including classroom management, and included a wide range of well-resourced activities which engaged and challenged the teachers. There were very good working relationships between the beginning teachers and the CASS officers; many practical ideas were shared and the beginning teachers were given resources to take back to their schools. The beginning teachers were keen to share their experiences with others, formally and informally. They showed a high level of interest in the topics covered, responded well and were able to apply their learning to their own school contexts.

### **KEY FINDING**

5.3 The beginning teachers reported to the inspectors that the quality of support they receive from CASS officers, both through the in-service education (INSET) programme and through induction visits to schools by officers, was good or very good, in almost equal measure.

5.4 The beginning teachers value especially the high level of pastoral care shown to them when they are not in permanent posts and the constructive and insightful feedback given, particularly through the Teacher e-Portfolio.

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<sup>6</sup> [www.tepni.org.uk](http://www.tepni.org.uk) for details on the Teacher e-Portfolio

5.5 The beginning teachers reported that they also welcome the opportunity to share experiences with other beginning teachers, including through online forums and by email, and to develop working relationships with other CASS officers.

5.6 The beginning teachers, who are discerning about what INSET courses to attend, appreciated the initial CASS induction conference and were asked frequently to report back on the courses attended to others teachers in their school. They mentioned, in particular: the value of the courses on behaviour management; on specific post-primary subject areas; the support provided for making effective use of the Teacher e-Portfolio and the teaching resources provided to them.

5.7 Some beginning teachers do not attend INSET courses: sometimes because of the pressure of teaching, especially when they are on short-term contracts, and sometimes because they are employed on the day of the course to release another beginning teacher to attend. In other instances, they would value more detail provided about the courses to help them to decide on their relevance.

The Teacher e-Portfolio is very well used by some beginning teachers, many of whom had already used it during ITE and wished to continue to do so. It enables them to keep and share a rich (multi-media digital) evidence base and record of their growing competence. Several beginning teachers appreciated the use of online discussion groups and forums to enable them to share ideas and tips with each other on a regular basis. One beginning teacher, who qualified in England, compared the e-portfolio used in her English ITE provider unfavourably with the NI Teacher e-Portfolio – she felt that the English e-portfolio was just an electronic tick sheet of tasks completed/competences mastered.

5.8 While the CASS officers who support induction work well together, across the Boards, in creative ways and in difficult circumstances, the policy, planning and practice assumptions, which are based upon the traditional concepts of Teacher Partnership, are no longer tenable today and need to be radically re-thought.

## 6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The 2004 inspection survey report concluded that:

*The arrangements for induction were generally effective in a majority of schools and most beginning teachers in permanent employment or on one-year temporary contracts are making satisfactory or better progress as teachers. The support provided by CASS is good and, on occasions, excellent.*

6.2 In 2011, the findings point to a stronger conclusion: that support for induction is effective in most schools and that all of the teachers observed in a teaching post are making good or better progress. The quality of the support provided by CASS is evaluated, both by ETI and the teachers, to be very good or outstanding.

6.3 The findings lend confidence to the view that, in the face of the enormous employment challenges facing beginning teachers, their development depends upon the effectiveness of the school as an improving institution and the ability of the school to build the capacity of all of its teachers as effective and reflective practitioners, including the capacity of the beginning teacher.

6.4 However, beginning teachers are under pressure, especially when they take on short-term cover (teaching on an existing timetable) to be seen to be working hard in their temporary posts, and as a result, the recommended 10% remission of their teaching load, the number of formal observations of their teaching in the course of a year and, sometimes, their opportunity to attend valuable CASS training sessions, are restricted undesirably.

6.5 In the context described in paragraph 1.2, very few beginning teachers are progressing through the 'induction year' as it was originally designed, that is, through the notion of the three connected stages of initial, induction and early in-service education – that is the 3 *'i's continuum* which underpinned early teacher education from the late 1990s.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need:

- **for DE**, as part of the ongoing Teacher Education Review, and in light of the depletion of CASS services, to place the school at the centre of teacher development , including that for the beginning teacher;
- **for DE as part of the above review** to outline the role of all of the ITE providers in the induction of beginning teachers;
- **for CASS** to support and enable schools to take on responsibility for beginning teachers who are on short-term contracts in a range of schools, to enable them to complete Induction within a year;
- **for schools** to establish flexible arrangements for beginning teachers to be observed and to observe lessons; to attend relevant INSET courses and to avail of the recommended 10% remission of their teaching load;
- **for beginning teachers** to adapt the CEP template to the circumstances of their post and take responsibility for their own professional development; and
- **for all of the teacher education partners** to ensure that the very good and better practice identified in this evaluation becomes typical in all schools.

**LIST OF SCHOOLS VISITED FOR THE EVALUATION**

Ceara Special School Lurgan  
Parkview Special School, Lisburn  
Ballyclare Primary School  
Braidside Integrated Primary School  
Currie Primary School, Belfast  
Donacloney Primary School  
Harmony Hill Primary School, Lisburn  
Holy Cross Girls' Primary School, Belfast  
Maralin Village Primary School  
Mossley Primary School  
St James's Primary School  
Seaview Primary School, Belfast  
Windmill Integrated Primary School, Dungannon  
Woodburn Primary School, Larne

Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir  
Gaelscoil an Chaistil, Ballycastle

Ballymoney High School  
Belfast Royal Academy  
Castlederg High School  
Coleraine Academical Institution  
Hazelwood Integrated College  
Little Flower High School, Belfast  
Lumen Christi College, Derry  
St Paul's High School, Bessbrook  
Rathfriland High School  
St Brigid's College, Derry  
St Ciaran's College, Ballygawley  
Thornhill College, Derry  
Ulidia Integrated College, Carrickfergus

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