

## PERSONAL TESTIMONIAL



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### Why School Direct?

After deciding to make quite a drastic career change, I was keen to throw myself into teaching and get as much experience as possible. The school-centred approach of the School Direct route meant that, after attending an induction week at university, I was in school right away, observing a variety of lessons and working closely with the department and staff across the school; I was supporting students and beginning to teach lesson starters or short activities within lessons.

One of the reasons I decided to train at John Ferneley College was simply how clear the school was about their expectations of me as a trainee and what they would offer in return. Anyone will tell you that Teacher Training is challenging, but at no point during the course have I felt unsupported or unable to ask any question that comes to mind. Whilst making sure I am pushing myself and developing, everyone involved in my training has gone out of their way to make sure the pace is suitable, to ensure I'm getting everything I need, and simply to ask me how things are going.

### My experience so far...

It is amazing to think back to the start of the year and consider the progress that I have made. When I first started training, I had no prior teaching experience and my main concerns were that I might stumble over my words or be faced with a behaviour issue I wasn't sure how to deal with. At this stage I have confidently been teaching up to 14 hours a week, taking ownership of my classes, preparing students for assessments and becoming invested in their progress. I am now no longer self-conscious about teaching but have instead started to see the difference I can make on a daily basis. There have been struggles, but I am really enjoying myself.

The ongoing support is consistent and relevant; on top of attending university on a weekly basis for lectures and to meet with other trainees, the school has ensured that I receive:

- Weekly continuous professional development (CPD) sessions, with practical advice about school policy and lots of fantastic anecdotal experience to draw from.
- A weekly meeting with my mentor, who helps to set clear, collaborative targets week-to-week, and is genuinely invested in my progress as a trainee.
- Frequent and constructive feedback on my teaching and other aspects of the role.
- A sense of belonging: since starting my training I have been treated as though I were a member of school staff, attending departmental meetings and staff briefings. I had access to a school laptop and resources from the day I started.

### What's next?

At this stage in my training, I feel confident in saying that deciding to teach was one of the best decisions I have made. Not only has the role been more rewarding than I could have imagined, I am now beginning to consider the exciting prospects of my career in teaching and finding the areas in which I wish to develop my knowledge and passion. As a trainee, it has been fantastic to work in an environment that is professional, considerate and ambitious for my outcomes – I know that come my first year of teaching, I will be as prepared as I possibly could be, thanks to my experiences at John Ferneley College.