**Supporting struggling trainees**

Trainees who are not successfully meeting the placement requirements or who show no/limited progress towards achieving statements on the ‘Professional Development Formative Framework’, often share some common characteristics and will need individualised support from their mentor. This support may be in areas such as lesson planning, behaviour management, responding to and setting development targets, listening to and acting on feedback. Trainees at this level often lack confidence and/or awareness of the requirements of the practice which may mean that they need more emotional and pastoral support.

A group of our experienced and expert mentors compiled the following guidelines to help mentors support these trainees make more successful progress.

**Top tips for success:**

Be honest and open with each other from the outset, but remain sensitive to trainee wellbeing.

Be clear about which strands/statements from the Formative Framework are causing concern – prioritise key areas, rather than overwhelm them if there are several

Use coaching techniques, rather than ‘telling’. Encourage trainee self-reflection/problem solving and support this.

Team-teach to help build confidence and actively demonstrate the targets/areas of concern

Make time for regular 1:1 meetings and look for positive small steps in progress.

Break down tasks / targets into manageable chunks and ensure they are clearly understood.

Encourage regular reflection and evaluation – help point out the positives where possible.

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| **Short term strategies** |
| After each lesson, ask the trainee to consider three positive points and two developmental points before discussion. Start the feedback with their reflection.  Team teach, so you can demonstrate and model what you mean, rather than just discuss/tell  Arrange for the trainee to observe other classes with the observation focus linked to the area of concern e.g. behaviour management, questioning, classroom organisation  Paired planning / model planning using a university planning sheet  Make time to discuss each aspect of practice – create a clear timetable / to do list for the week which includes admin tasks as well as teaching responsibilities  Start with the trainee teaching a group or half the class to build their confidence  If the support needed is emotional, make time for informal chats to support the relationship  Give immediate feedback frequently – informal observations, positive reinforcement – reference positives/progress in curriculum strands and Professional Development Formative Framework  Notice when the trainee uses initiative or make a positive contribution and comment on this  Focus on teacher questioning strategies and how to build on pupil responses  Check that paperwork is up-to-date – a backlog can be overwhelming and lead to further issues |

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| **Medium to long term strategies** |
| Create a trainee support plan to ensure targets set are clear, achievable and understood, with clear timescales  Follow up targets, build on targets achieved to ensure progression in the strand/focus area  Go through the professional development formative framework together and discuss the features of each strand - self reflect, highlight and annotate achievements so far  Discuss the learning achieved in the lesson, look at books/work together to reflect on and support the trainee to evaluate the learning achieved/not achieved  Ask another colleague to observe a lesson and provide feedback and another expert perspective |