Models of Support in the Teacher Induction Scheme in Scotland:
The Views of Head Teachers and Supporters

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1   Introduction

Before 2002, teachers entering the profession in Scotland simply had to complete satisfactorily two years of teaching experience in order to become fully registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). During that period, the Probationer was treated like any other teacher, following a full timetable and relying on colleagues for support in addressing any issues that arose. This was a haphazard system, lacking national consistency, as newly qualified teachers applied for vacant posts in competition with serving teachers, thus it was a matter of fortune whether they arrived in a strongly supportive school or department, or whether they were left largely to fend for themselves.

The Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS) in Scotland replaced this system in August 2002 as part of the implementation of the McCrone Report[1] (2001). The Scheme offers eligible teachers with an initial provisional teaching qualification from a Scottish university a structured experience for one year.

After completion of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), the TIS guarantees a one year training post which includes a substantial support system. The Probationer teacher's timetable has a maximum class commitment of 0.7 full time equivalent (FTE), with the remaining 0.3 FTE (1½ days per week) being devoted to continuous professional development. The teacher has an experienced teacher as a nominated Supporter, with the school being funded to provide 0.1 FTE release from timetable for the supporter.

The perceived success[2] of this Scheme has provoked world wide interest, particularly in areas where there are difficulties in recruiting and, especially, retaining teachers. In February 2007 it provoked great interest among teachers and education managers from a range of European countries during a study visit hosted by the GTCS through the Arion programme, and the state of Georgia in the USA has been so impressed with the Scheme that it proposes to create its own scheme based very closely on the Scottish model. In February 2007 a report of the Standing Committee on Education and Training of the Australian Parliament[3] recommended that "the Teacher Induction Scheme administered by the GTCS in partnership with the Scottish Executive Education Department be the model of induction that should be followed in Australia" (Recommendation 7). In the following month the federal government invited the Chief Executive of GTCS to present seminars in Canberra and Melbourne on aspects of Scottish education and to provide information to the Australian government about the Scottish induction model.

In 2005, the GTCS published two research reports[4][5] reflecting the experiences of teachers who participated in the scheme in 2002-2003 and 2003-2004. During school session 2005-2006 GTCS followed up that research with a more specific project to assess the nature and impact of the support offered to Probationer teachers with a view to future enhancement of the scheme and the provision of good practice guidelines for a range of stakeholders.

This project specifically involved consultation with Head Teachers and with Supporters to discover their perceptions on the operation of the scheme.

2   Research Methodology

Each of the two potential respondent populations received a detailed structured questionnaire, consisting of a series of closed and open response questions. The questionnaires were divided into sections as outlined in Table 1, enabling data to be gathered on key aspects of the scheme.

The questionnaires covered activity for academic sessions 2002/03 – 2005/06, enabling comparisons to be made, though most of the results were fairly constant across the four academic sessions.

Table 1: Questionnaire Content

Head Teacher Questionnaire	Supporter Questionnaire
School details to enable differentiation between different sectors, sizes and settings	Some personal details, enabling differentiation between respondent groups
The school's involvement as part of the TIS	Their involvement as a Supporter
Their views relating to a number of key features of an effective induction experience	Their perceptions of how effectively ITE prepared the Probationers for their Induction year; the operation of the TIS; how effectively the TIS prepares Probationers for teaching as a fully registered teacher; and their part in the TIS.
The training and support received in relation to Head Teachers' roles and responsibilities	The training and support received in relation to their roles and responsibilities as a Supporter and facilitation of that role by the school
Their views on the processes of the TIS	Their overall view of the TIS
Their views relating to their participation in the TIS	
Any additional comments relating to their experiences on the TIS	

826 Head Teachers (a response rate of 31.8%) and 1,168 designated Supporters submitted responses. While the actual response rate cannot be calculated since the number of Supporters in each school is not known, this represents a substantial response population. Both surveys obtained responses from all 32 of Scotland's local authorities. The views expressed may, therefore, be taken as reasonably representative across the country. In both surveys, responses from primary schools predominated (75.8% in the Head Teacher survey, 65.8% in the Supporter survey), but this is predictable as many more Primary schools are involved in the TIS[6].

3   Results and Discussion

3.1   Managing the Teacher Induction Scheme at School Level

The GTCS document, *Achieving the Standard for Full Registration: Guidance for New Teachers and Schools*, published in August 2005, lists the roles and responsibilities of a Head Teacher in administering the Scheme. Their questionnaire asked Head Teachers about the training they had received in respect of these roles and responsibilities, with their responses being summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 – Roles and Responsibilities as a Head Teacher

Element	Percentage receiving training provided by	
	Local Authorities	**Other**
Becoming familiar with the Standard for Full Registration.	66.8	5.8
Gaining an understanding of what the Induction year experience should be for the Probationer, and the school's role in it.	74.2	5.6
Monitoring and evaluating the school's Probation support programme with the Supporter(s).	54.0	7.0
Completing, in conjunction with the Supporter, the interim and final profiles for the Probationer.	61.4	5.9

These figures reveal that, while most Head Teachers received training to raise their awareness of the experience that the Induction year is intended to offer Probationers, the provision of training in monitoring and evaluating the school's support programme was relatively sparse. Head Teachers reported that much of the 'training' was along the lines of being informed of the relevant documentation and doing so in their own CPD time, or learning from regular communication with other Head Teachers and local authority support staff. Furthermore, unless Head Teachers also acted as Supporters, they did not tend to receive focussed training, but relied on close communication with those who had received Supporter training. They often viewed this as adequate as the main burden falls on the Supporter. However, some did indicate that they would have welcomed specific training on supporting and dealing effectively with struggling Probationers, better guidance on the role of a Supporter and having access to exemplars of completed profiles.

3.2   Becoming and Being a Supporter

Two-thirds of Supporters had become involved either because they were 'recommended' or because they had volunteered for the role. The remainder had been invited by the Head Teacher or school manager, had the role as part of their remit or were recruited because of local requirements for a particular school or departmental focus.

When Head Teachers were asked if they used specific criteria in selecting Supporters, 77.1% indicated that they did so. The most common criterion was that the person should be an experienced teacher who is a good role model. In the Primary sector Head Teachers often preferred the Supporter to be a member of the senior management team; this was also true in the Secondary sector, but in that sector many felt it to be beneficial for the Supporter to be a Principal Teacher in the department in which the Probationer is working.

The most commonly mentioned attributes sought in a Supporter were good communication skills (including listening skills), good inter-personal skills, management and leadership skills and organisational ability. In addition, many Head Teachers looked for attributes such as being supportive, creative, inspirational, patient and approachable, as well as being committed to continuous professional development. Other criteria included willingness to take on or interest in the role, having non-class commitment and training as a mentor.

In terms of their commitment, in each year except session 2002/03 over 70% of Supporters who responded were responsible for a single Probationer, with approximately 20% being responsible for two Probationers and a very small proportion being responsible for three or more.

3.3 Training for Supporters

The GTCS has also identified the roles and responsibilities involved in being a Supporter[7]. Their questionnaire asked Supporters to provide information on the training they had received in respect of these roles and responsibilities, grouped together to add coherence to the format as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Roles and Responsibilities of a Supporter

Element	Percentage receiving training provided by		
	Local Authorities	**School**	**Other**
The Induction Process • Becoming familiar with the Standard for Full Registration.	69.0	6.9	1.4
• Gaining an understanding of what the Induction year experience should be for the Probationer, and the school's role in it.	72.9	8.6	2.0
Supporter Meetings • Running regular meetings that focus on the Probationer's self-evaluation of their progress.	42.9	25.0	1.9
• Identifying development needs and plans.	39.6	27.5	2.1
Observed Sessions • Monitoring and evaluating progress through observation of teaching.	30.7	31.9	3.4
• Providing constructive feedback.	31.3	31.2	3.5
Working with Adults • Creating an open, supportive and challenging climate for discussion.	26.7	27.1	3.9
• Providing pastoral support.	22.1	29.0	3.7
Reporting • Overseeing the development, implementation and review of the Probationer's action plans and portfolio.	44.0	23.4	2.1
• Completing, in conjunction with the Head Teacher, the interim and final profiles for the Probationer.	41.8	28.3	1.4

The responses suggest that the provision of training in standard areas such as the Induction process itself and Reporting was good, but that less training was provided in other areas, notably Working with Adults. Most training activities were provided by local authorities and schools, with the balance varying depending on the skill. For example, local authorities provided most of the training on the Induction process, with the school role becoming much larger in operational areas.

In terms of quality, respondents rated the quality of the training they received on a five-point Likert scale, from very good to very poor[8]. In all cases, more than 50% of respondents training in each area rated the quality as good or very good. However, the maximum figure of 70.3% (for the Induction process) indicates that in general terms the quality of training has room for improvement.

The other ingredient in maximising the value of the work of a Supporter is the provision of adequate time to spend on the role. Through the TIS, the local authority receives funding to enable each Supporter to be allocated 0.1 additional non-contact time specifically for this purpose. When questioned about the facilitation of their role by the school, most (93.4%) of Supporters reported that they and the Probationers had time to discuss the progress of the Probationer and ensure access to appropriate professional development activities, but 21.4% also stated that the 0.1 non-contact time was inadequate to enable them to give the Probationer the correct level of support. This was especially the case when working with Probationers who were having difficulty. Many Supporters used their own non-contact time and after school hours to support Probationers. Some also reported difficulty in accessing even the nominal 0.1 non-contact time, citing issues ranging from having to support more than one Probationer on a single 0.1 allocation to inability to obtain class cover or to timetabling difficulties. Where a Supporter was also a Depute Head Teacher, it was often assumed that it fell within that remit and no additional time was allocated. In sum, Supporters expressed clearly the burden, frustration and stress associated with a desire to carry out their role effectively within a framework that did not necessarily enable this.

By contrast, Head Teacher respondents revealed much less concern about this issue, with only 5.9% feeling that the 0.1 allocation was inadequate to enable the Supporter to provide Probationers with appropriate support. However, in their qualitative statements a number of Head Teachers said that this allocation was in no way sufficient for the work required, while others believed that the appropriateness of the allocation depended very much about on the abilities of the Probationer. Some also commented on the difficulty from a management perspective to arrange for the Supporter to be released from other duties.

Despite this concern, 89.1% of Supporters rated the quality of their overall experiences of being a Supporter as good or very good, with 84.1% giving these ratings to the overall quality of support provided in the school, though at 67.4% and 65.6% the ratings given to support from the local authority and GTCS were rather weaker.

3.4   Supporting Probationers

The induction process has a number of key elements designed to enable newly qualified teachers to obtain a level of teaching experience and continuous professional development that will allow them to demonstrate, by the end of the induction period, that they meet the Standard for Full Registration (SFR). These include:

- The requirement to have a 0.7 FTE teaching timetable. In primary schools the ideal is for this to be spent with one class and in secondary schools there should be contact with as wide a spread as possible of classes across the year groups, including presentation groups for SQA examination courses.
- Regular weekly meetings with the Supporter to gauge progress, discuss the Probationer's self evaluation, identify opportunities and needs for continuous professional development and identify action points.
- Observed sessions regularly each month to provide a basis for discussion between Probationer and Supporter.
- Completion of both an interim and a final profile to measure progress and confirm achievement of the SFR.

The critical part of the research in assessing the success of the scheme in supporting Probationers was the section of the questionnaire which asked Supporters for their perceptions of the Teacher Induction Scheme. They were asked to evaluate the experience under five headings, each supported by either four or five specific questions.

First, the questionnaire sought views on the relationships between Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and the TIS. While most (84%)[*] thought that the teachers were well prepared to enter the induction year, some respondents reported that primary teachers with postgraduate diplomas in education were less well prepared than those with B. Ed. qualifications and that Probationers were least well prepared in the area of day-to-day management of the organisation of pupils and the associated workload. Similarly, there were criticisms from some Supporters that the ITE profiles and those used during the induction year were not sufficiently linked to inform the planning of their CPD activities. It did not appear, for example, that the ITE profiles are being used to determine local authority CPD activities for probationers. In practice, CPD activities are based largely on what previous probationers have found useful, which if course is a reasonable criterion. However, there could be scope for more liaison between Teacher Education Institutions and local authorities to help inform provision for areas of need identified via these profiles. Current practice appears to be that local authorities develop a suite of programmes from which the Supporter and Probationer attempt to develop a needs-based programme rather than the local authority creating their programme from a needs analysis of the current group of Probationers.

Evaluations of the value and effectiveness of Supporter meetings were consistently high. Most (91.6%) reported that they were able to meet weekly as intended and (96.2%) that these meetings provided an appropriate level of support. Furthermore, 87% of Supporters agreed that these meetings were well structured, making it possible to agree clear actions to take forward. However, some of those who did not agree on the last point commented that meetings were not taking place in a scheduled manner with a clearly defined focus or agreed outcomes or action point. Others noted that even where such a focus had been agreed, it was not uncommon for part of the meeting to deal with more general issues. One interpretation of the last set of remarks could be that it shows Probationers and Supporters being flexible and pragmatic.

A critical part of the Induction process is the observed session, where the Supporter watches the Probationer in action with pupils in order to give constructive feedback and advice. As with Supporter meetings, while most supporters (82.7%) were able to attend these sessions on a regular, monthly basis as intended, there was a significant minority who found this impossible. Given that many Supporters have management remits, it is perhaps not surprising that the major set of reasons for this related to practical issues in school life, particularly cover problems, teacher absence and the complexities of timetabling. Others reported that the Supporter was such a regular visitor to the Probationer's class that there was less need for formal observations, or that in some secondary schools observations took place more frequently to see the Probationer with a full range of classes. Some Supporters also reported that they tended not to observe the Probationer until after a settling in period, or saved the observations for nearer the time when interim or final profiles were due for completion. While understandable in one sense, this may have meant that some Probationers who would have benefited from early observations to highlight issues and support them to overcome these did not receive such early observations. Observations should occur from early in the session as they should not be seen exclusively or primarily as having the purpose of assessment, but recognised as a key professional development tool. Furthermore, they should be carried out in a structured way, each with a specific focus and agreed follow up targets to ensure they have the most positive impact possible on a Probationer's professional development.

Despite these reservations about management issues, there was near unanimity on the value and structure of the observations themselves, with 96.7% of Supporters agreeing that observed sessions provided the correct level of support and opportunity for development. They were equally positive that there was advance agreement on the focus of each

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[*] Figures for agreement or disagreement in answer to statements are aggregates of those responding "agree" and "strongly agree" or "disagree" and "strongly disagree".

observed session and that they were able to provide oral and written feedback to the Probationers.

A major purpose of both the Supporter meeting and the observed session is to help the Probationer teacher plan their CPD, for which 0.3 FTE of their time is allocated. Supporters agreed (94.6%) that CPD activities undertaken by the Probationer teacher were clearly matched with specific areas of the SFR. Most (90.1%) also felt that the local authority CPD programmes provided a worthwhile, balanced range of CPD opportunities, with 93.4% also believing that the school CPD programmes offered such opportunities. However, some were less sure that local authority and school based CPD programmes were sufficiently complementary to avoid duplication. Although the above statements were very positive about the value and impact of the CPD programmes, a significant minority of Supporters (19.1%) disagreed that they had played an important role in planning the CPD experience of the Probationer with whom they were working. There were several reasons for this: how much CPD was organised centrally by the local authority for all Probationers; in-school programmes being designed by the Head Teacher or Depute Head Teacher for all staff, therefore not designed specifically for Probationer needs; and more positively the strong role taken by the Probationers themselves in defining their CPD experiences, the role of the Supporter being to discuss rather than dictate these experiences and to help set them up where necessary.

The final section of the Supporter questionnaire, evaluating the Induction experience as a whole, contained some identical questions to those in the Head Teacher questionnaire, enabling comparison of their different perspectives on the process. Table 4 compares their responses to the key questions.

Table 4: Overall Assessment of the Teacher Induction Scheme

Statement	Supporters		Head Teachers	
	Agree/ Strongly Agree %	*Disagree/ Strongly Disagree %*	*Agree/ Strongly Agree %*	*Disagree/ Strongly Disagree %*
The TIS prepares the Probationer well for their early experiences as a fully registered teacher.	90.2	5.6	89.8	8.0
The Induction process encouraged, and provided opportunities for, reflection on practice by the Probationer.	97.7	0.3	98.2	0.6
The Induction process encouraged and provided opportunities to enhance classroom management skills for the Probationer.	97.1	0.7	96.3	1.9
The 0.7/0.3 contact hours / professional development balance is appropriate.	76.4	20.8	69.3	29.5

These figures reveal conclusively the general consensus that the TIS provides a valuable and supportive experience for newly qualified teachers, with a clear focus on professional development and reflection. There is, however, a significant level of concern that the balance of time allocated for class contact and professional development may be too rigid. Both Supporters and Head Teachers regarded the 0.7/0.3 balance as appropriate at the beginning of the year, but many believed that as the teacher gained experience over the year the balance could be altered, with a reduction in the specific time allocated for CPD after the first term. A comparison of these views with those of Probationers themselves, as revealed in a previous report in 2005[3] showed that 86.7% of Probationers had agreed that

the 0.7/0.3 balance was appropriate, though many Probationers also agreed that a gradual reduction in the CPD allocation across the year could be justified.

Both Supporters and Head Teachers were also concerned that maintaining this balance across a full teaching year might disadvantage teachers moving into full-time teaching positions following induction, as they would not have been exposed even to a short period of delivering a full timetable. Some Probationers also referred to the desirability of moving towards 'reality' as the Induction year progresses. Such a move might also enhance the status of Probationer teachers and improve relationships between Probationers and other teachers who did not like Probationers being out of class.

4   Conclusions

The results of this research support very strongly the conclusions of the previous work (Pearson and Robson, 2005A), that the TIS in Scotland is a major success that provides very good preparation for newly qualified teachers to take on the full responsibility for classes and function successfully as a fully registered teacher following attainment of the SFR.

The responses to the research indicate many strengths in the existing arrangements:

- the use of specific, if individually generated and ad hoc, criteria to inform the selection of Supporters;
- the high ratings of satisfaction among Supporters, who clearly are convinced that their role is important, worthwhile and constructive in helping Probationers to gain full value from Induction;
- the importance of the CPD element within the Scheme;
- the benefits of well focused observed sessions in developing Probationers' skills; and
- the overall effectiveness of the Scheme.

The research outcomes also identify a number of areas in which there is potential to improve the arrangements, notably:

- the debate over the appropriate balance between classroom experience and ring-fenced time for CPD for Probationers;
- perceived weaknesses in the training offered to Supporters in specific areas;
- the importance of managing other demands on Supporters to ensure they have sufficient time to fulfil this function effectively, including both the adequacy of the 0.1 time allocation and the issue of protecting that time;
- the need for a more strategic approach to enhance the complementarity between the CPD opportunities offered at local authority and school level; and
- the need to review the format of the ITE profile to tailor it better to the needs of the Induction year.

GTCS has used these findings to begin the process of developing national guidelines to inform the selection, training and support offered to teachers selected as Supporters for Probationers. These guidelines should help to produce more consistency in approach across Scotland.

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[1] *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* (2001) (Edinburgh; Scottish Executive Education Department)
[2] A mid-term report: A first stage review of the cost and implementation of the teachers' agreement, A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century (2006) (Edinburgh; Audit Scotland) (Para. 22) www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/committees/education/inquiries/McCrone/Audit%2520Scotland.pdf+Teacher+Induction+Scheme&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=25&gl=uk (accessed 11 June 2007)

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[3] *Top of the Class: Report on the Inquiry into Teacher Education* (2007) (Canberra; The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia)

[4] M.A. Pearson and D. Robson (2005A), *Reflecting on Experiences of the Teacher Induction Scheme* (Edinburgh, GTCS)

[5] M.A. Pearson and D. Robson (2005B), *Experiences of the Teacher Induction Scheme: Operation, Support and CPD* (Edinburgh, GTCS)

[6] Further details of the demographic breakdown of respondents will be published in a forthcoming GTCS publication reporting in detail the research outcomes.

[7] Achieving the Standard for Full Registration: Guidance for New Teachers and Schools (August 2005) (Para.2.2)

[8] The full tables analysing the responses will be published in a forthcoming GTCS publication reporting in detail the research outcomes.