What is School Direct?

School Direct is a programme whereby schools recruit trainees directly and select them to train and work within their partnership schools. Schools, therefore, have more control over the quality of training that is provided and how it is delivered. We guarantee an interview for any relevant post in a partnership school for those who are successful on the programme with us.

What are the routes?

There are two routes into School Direct: Salaried and non-salaried. The salaried route is aimed at graduates with at least 3 years work experience and is an employment based route into teaching. The non-salaried route is open to all graduates funded by tuition fees paid by the graduate through the student loan scheme. Our School Direct programmes will lead you to gaining a PGCE in conjunction with our partnership universities.

Who is in our partnership?

The Warwick School (Lead School) (www.warwick.surrey.sch.uk)
Reigate School (http://www.reigate-school.surrey.sch.uk)
Oakwood School (http://www.oakwood.surrey.sch.uk)
Reigate College (http://www.reigate.ac.uk/)
Royal Alexandra and Albert School (http://www.raa-school.co.uk/)
Oxted School (http://www.oxtedschool.co.uk)
The Ashcombe School (http://www.ashcombe.surrey.sch.uk/index.shtml)
University of Sussex (http://www.sussex.ac.uk/education)
University of Brighton (http://about.brighton.ac.uk/education/)

We have a very successful and long-standing tradition of working with these schools and universities and have been fortunate enough to offer permanent employment to several of our School Direct Trainee teachers this year.

What kind of training can we offer you?

The model for training that we will follow will primarily focus on training in the classroom as well as having regular focused training days delivered by outstanding practitioners. We believe it is important to be in an innovative environment where you are supported and challenged to reach your potential. The Warwick Partnership will be delivering all training and professional development to those on the School Direct programme. We believe this will give a rich and varied experience to prepare you for a highly successful teaching career.
University Training Component  Both School Direct Training and School Direct Salaried Routes

Our training is supported by the University of Sussex and the University of Brighton.
Both universities have a long and successful tradition in teacher education. The university works with us to provide quality inputs on how to teach and assess in different secondary subjects or across the curriculum in primary schools. The University also provides a comprehensive programme of professional studies which complements the sessions offered across our partnership. University sessions take place on the University campus and include a mix of lectures, workshops and tutorials led by the Faculty of Education, excellent teachers from partnership schools and other educational experts. These sessions also allow you to share your experiences with other trainee teachers and reflect upon the learning and teaching trainees do in schools.

Every trainee is expected to complete a number of academic assignments at Masters Level which are designed to develop knowledge and understanding, encourage reflection and assess progress against the Teachers’ Standards. The University works in partnership with the school to organise a final assessment and make a recommendation for QTS. A university tutor will be assigned to support you whilst on the programme and you will be eligible to access a range of support services provided by the University.

School Direct Training Route
Candidates on a School Direct Training place will be automatically registered on the PGCE which offers up to 90 Master credits and enables progression onto an MEd in the NQT year.

School Direct Salaried Route
Candidates on the School Direct (salaried) route can opt for an additional academic award - a PGCE in Pedagogy and Practice (PP).

To find out more about our partnership with the universities please visit:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/education/ite/schooldirect  -University of Sussex
http://about.brighton.ac.uk/education/  -University of Brighton

Entry criteria:
1. UK university degree (2:2 or above) or a recognized equivalent qualification

2. Grade C or above in GCSE English Language and Mathematics and successful completion of the Skills tests for Numeracy and Literacy before you commence the course.

3. You will be required to undergo an enhanced DBS check to verify you’re suitable for working with young people.
1. The Warwick School is an 11 to 16, co-educational, maintained Community School situated in the very heart of the Redhill Community.

2. We pride ourselves on being fully inclusive; providing outstanding care for all students and offering a safe, secure and nurturing environment for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and other vulnerably young people.

3. The school was judged ‘good’ with ‘outstanding’ behaviour and safety in its Ofsted inspection of February 2013.

4. Overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has risen steadily over recent years, especially in English and science, with mathematics improving at GCSE A* to C grades by 10% between 2012 and 2013.

5. Student progress measured by Value added has been above the national average for the past three years, being significantly above in the last two years.

6. The Warwick School is recognized as a beacon for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) by Surrey SATRO and other organizations and local employers, with its exciting Science Summer School, engineering days and Opportunities Weeks which bring over 100 employer partners into the school environment.

7. In 2013 The Warwick School was the first secondary school to be awarded the Anti-Bullying Charter Silver award.

8. The school has an outstanding history of training development for graduate trainees (formerly GTP), Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) induction, being the only school whose Professional Mentor is a Local Authority Consultant in teacher education and induction.

9. The learning environment is well resourced to enable teachers to support each student to succeed, with high quality general classroom facilities, laboratories, workshops and ICT suites.

10. Due to our happy, productive and supportive working environment, staff turnover at the school is low, with few staff leaving us other than for promotion or the need to re-locate.
More about Our Partnership Schools

1. GCSE results show Oakwood are in the top 20% of most improved schools from 2009-2012 and significantly above the national average.
2. NQT and ITT programme has been rated as Outstanding in the last 2 local Authority inspections.
3. Large rural site.
4. Part of a successful consortium of schools and colleges delivering a wide range of courses to post 14 students.
5. The hub of the Horley learning Partnership, a confederation of primary schools and partner secondary schools.
6. Dedicated Speech, Learning, Communication and Numeracy Centre.
7. New dedicated Creative Art facilities, currently being extended to house two new state of the art Drama Studios.
8. Investors in People Gold (June 2012) and Investors in Careers Education (December 2013).
9. Wide range of extra-curricular activities, including summer term activities week.
Reigate School

Helping students realise their academic, social and personal potential.

1. Reigate School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school situated on the edge of Reigate.
2. We were graded Outstanding by Ofsted in July 2012.
3. We have high expectations of our students and staff, who strive to ensure that every child achieves their academic, social and personal potential.
4. We are committed to working in collaboration with other schools, colleges and the local authority.
5. We highly value our community partnerships and have established an excellent reputation with both University and other accredited teacher training providers.
6. Prospective candidates are welcome to visit the school in advance of application for School Direct.
Reigate College is an immensely successful Sixth Form College which has been massively oversubscribed for more than a decade.

Graded Outstanding by OFSTED since 2005 and regularly used as a source of advice to other colleges.

Consistently among the top performing sixth form colleges in the country.

A Beacon College, Investor In People and Investor In Careers.

More than 100 dedicated sixth form teaching staff.

A huge range of more than 40 A level and Level 3 BTEC courses.

Long running and very successful teacher training programme – more than one third of our teaching staff were trained at the college.

Superb site with specialist facilities for sport, music, drama and dance.

Strong student support departments including a large dedicated careers area, learning support and Independent learning Centre.

A large extracurricular programme including arts, sport, Duke of Edinburgh Gold and many trips.
The Royal Alexandra and Albert School is a boarding school for girls and boys aged 7 to 18. Our results have risen steadily over the last eleven years and, in parallel, our pupil numbers have gently grown from 530 in 2002 to 1000 in September 2014. With the growth of the Sixth Form and a rise in boarding numbers we expect to reach our maximum of 1100 in September 2017.

With 170 pupils in the Sixth Form in September 2014 we are big enough to offer a wide range of subjects but small enough to care about each pupil. 61% of all A level grades obtained in 2014 were grade B or above.

In addition to high quality teaching, pupils enjoy outstanding pastoral care, top-class facilities and packed schedule of activities.

With 470 boarders and 525 Flexi Boarders and Day Boarders this is a lively community with lessons on Saturday mornings and a significant community of boarders who stay at weekends.

Excellent results combined with affordable fees make this school the first choice for many parents seeking a boarding education for their child.

"We really strive to not only achieve great results but to create a balanced and rich environment enabling pupils and staff to flourish."
1. Oxted School is one of the largest comprehensive schools in the country with nearly 2000 students on roll and over 400 in the sixth form. Our size allows us to provide a very broad curriculum and an extensive range of courses for our students.

2. The site is based in an attractive location in semi-rural Surrey at the foot of the north downs, with easy access to London, airports and the coast.

3. Oxted School is a high performing school against every measure. Our GCSE results with 75% (66% including English & Maths – 25% of which achieved A-A*) of students gained A*-C. At A-Level 47% of Sixth Form students achieved A*-B in the Summer of 2015.

4. Since September 2013, Oxted School has benefited from working closely with The Howard Partnership Trust (THPT) a small Surrey based multi-academy chain. From September 2015 we became an Academy and joined THPT. This innovation in high quality partnership work has already accelerated the school improvement journey towards outstanding.

5. Our ITT programme is first class – our team of skilled mentors work very hard to maximise the potential of trainee teachers. Oxted has a proven record of developing outstanding teachers, and also appointing teachers we have trained.

6. We have excellent links with Universities, colleges and schools in the area.

7. We offer a huge range of extra-curricular activities: our Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is the largest in the County and Year 8 camps are two very popular and successful examples of our provision – this is only a snapshot of the provision we can offer students - and we encourage all staff to get involved.

8. We are extremely proud of our outstanding Visually Impaired Centre.

9. Our resources are first-class with dedicated Mathematics & Science Blocks; impressive sports and creative arts facilities.

10. With nearly 230 members of staff at Oxted successful applicants will be extremely well supported and be part of a professional, happy workforce. CPD is central to the School’s ethos and you will be well supported with a range of training opportunities.
The Ashcombe School

1. The Ashcombe School is an LA community comprehensive school for 1400 pupils of all abilities between the ages of 11-18

2. The school’s academic success is widely recognised. Around 70% gain 5A*-C incl. En and Ma (these figures are first entry and do not include any non-GCSE courses), 99% 5A*-G (GCSE) and a fifth gain 2A* or more.

3. We have a large sixth form with 300 students. 25 A ‘level subjects are on offer. The average points score per students is 350 UCAS points and we have a very open approach to entry.

4. We were graded good by Ofsted in 2015 and outstanding in the pastoral care that we offer to students.

5. We were designated a Leadership Partner school in 2009 and we have a strong outward facing approach and work closely to offer help to many other schools.

6. We have a successful NQT programme and a successful middle leader programme.

7. The school achieved accreditation as an Investor in People in 1999 and an annual review of this takes place. (summary is on the school website) which praises the school’s approach to developing staff, and reports the very positive views the staff have about working at this school

8. Wide range of extracurricular activities throughout the year (Duke of Edinburgh award, residential trips both at home and abroad); Activities Week in the summer term.

9. Prospective candidates are welcome to visit us at work should they wish to.
How do candidates apply?

Applications must be made through UCAS Teacher Training using the APPLY system found on their website at www.ucas.com/apply/teacher-training. Candidates begin by registering their details; then choosing where, when and how they plan to train. Applicants will need to provide details of two references as part of the application process. Once the application has been received and processed by UCAS, it is made available online for training providers to consider. Applicants have two opportunities to secure a place – Apply 1 and Apply 2.

Apply 1

This is the first application route, which allows applicants to apply to several training programmes simultaneously, from 1 November each year. Candidates can choose up to three open training programmes at a time.

Apply 2

Eligible candidates can use Apply 2 from 2 January each year.

The application fee for 2015 is £19 – which covers both Apply 1 and 2. Below is the link to the UCAS website where you can view a video on the School Direct application process.

[Video on School Direct Application Process](#)

To be able to access this video you will need either Firefox or Google Chrome.
### Which Courses do we offer at the Warwick Partnership?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Programme Type</th>
<th>Partner ITT provider</th>
<th>Course Qualification</th>
<th>Host School</th>
<th>No of Recruits</th>
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</table>
Please let us know if you have applied by contacting us and registering an interest with us. We will happily answer any questions or welcome the opportunity for you to visit the school of your choice. If you would like to arrange a school visit at any of the partnership schools please e mail Pius Gallagher, School Direct Co-ordinator. Ga@warwick.surrey.sch.uk Please note that we participate in the School Experience Programme. If you are interested in taking part in this, please contact Rachel Ind, Professional Tutor. In@warwick.surrey.sch.uk

Should your application be successful, a selection day will be held for each subject area consisting of an interview, teaching activity and discussion to assess your suitability and commitment to the teaching profession. The University will also hold separate interviews to ensure that candidates meet the entry criteria.

Should you be selected to attend interview you will need to bring along with you to the interview original certificates of your degree and GCSE qualifications. Please note that before commencing your training all successful applicants are required to pass Skills Tests in Numeracy and Literacy.

We believe that teaching is hugely rewarding and exciting and hope that you will make the positive choice to join us at the start of your career. We believe the opportunity to train through School Direct is exceptional and that we, together with the group of schools and university with whom we are working will provide you with an excellent experience to prepare you as an outstanding teacher and future leader. We look forward to meeting you in the future.
CPD Opportunities at the Warwick Partnership after Initial Teacher Training

NQT Induction:
The Warwick Partnership has received outstanding judgements from the Appropriate Body for the quality of its Induction and Assessment of NQTs. All schools and colleges in the Partnership have been monitored in the last three years by Consultants from Babcock FourS. The Lead Consultant for NQT Induction at the Appropriate Body wrote:

“The Induction provided at The Warwick is an example of high quality provision and is a real flagship for the Partnership.”

Second Year Teachers:
All schools within the partnership offer an NQT+1 Support Programme which is tailored to meet the needs of individuals in their second year of teaching. This involves peer observation and sharing good practice sessions which aim to provide opportunities for teachers to develop their practice in a supportive and non-judgemental way. A system of mentoring and coaching is also provided where the need arises so that teachers who require additional support receive it.

Career Development at Partnership Schools

Oakwood School believes that supportive Continuous Professional Development is the key by which outstanding practice can be unlocked. There is a rich programme of training that takes place each year targeted towards, not only the school improvement plan, but also in the individual needs of the teachers within the school. The plan is focussed to ensure that all teachers are able to access a full tool kit of strategies which can be used to inspire, excite and enthuse students to achieve their full potential.

In addition to this training programme there are opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively with colleagues from other schools including within the Warwick Partnership, e.g. we hosted a joint INSET day between the 3 schools at the start of the Spring Term. This gave teachers from all 3 schools the opportunity to share outstanding practice within faculty groups. The faculty teams from across the 3 schools are now developing this further by hosting individual session for each faculty in twilight sessions at alternating schools.

Professional development is also not restricted just to teaching, there are a variety of other training programmes targeted towards career development and leadership, including a Newly Qualified Teacher Training programme consistently graded as outstanding by the Local Authority, an intensive Year 2 of teaching programme involving an action research project that the participant delivers back to the faculty, the findings of which are incorporated into the faculty (and sometimes even school) action plan and an Aspiring Middle Leader Training programme delivered by the Local Authority in collaboration with our partner schools in The Warwick Partnership. All this and much more have helped contribute to Oakwood School being awarded Investors in People Gold in June 2012.

Oakwood School provides all Newly Qualified Teachers with a comprehensive and interactive training programme that is continually graded as Outstanding by the Local Authority. The course covers not only the statutory roles and responsibilities of teachers such as;

- Safeguarding
- Report writing and SMART targets
- SEN and the statementing process
The role of the school nurse

But also how to develop and refine your skills within the classroom, with sessions such as,
- Learning styles and the inspirational lesson
- Emotional intelligence
- Enhancing literacy and numeracy within all teachers’ classrooms
- Group work and student engagement
- Effective tutoring and PSHCE.

The support programme continues into Year 2 of teaching with a structured peer observation programme followed by an action research project tailored towards improving student progress.
The Warwick School is a ‘professional learning community’ where all are involved in a continuous process of improvement and enrichment. The school is committed to fostering a positive climate for continuous learning. CPD is the means by which the school is able to motivate and develop its community. It does so at a variety of levels – whole school, team, individual, team, and recently, through wider networks with an emphasis on collaborative learning.

Continuing Professional Development is an entitlement for all staff through:

- School-based INSET days;
- Induction programme for new and trainee staff;
- External courses;
- Subject leader network meetings
- In-house Training Forums;
- Invitation to Consultants to work on targeted areas;
- Partnership working with a number of secondary schools in the area.

Whole school training days offer the INSET provision needed to keep up to date with national developments and initiatives. In the last seven years we have focused on assessment for learning and behaviour for learning, preparing for the new curriculum, performance management and appraisal, literacy, Maths across the curriculum, marking, questioning, coaching and mentoring.

Our senior mentor runs a highly successful induction programme where trainees become confident and effective teachers. There are two main aspects to the induction period:

1. A individual programme of professional development and monitoring, and
2. Assessment against nationally agreed teaching standards.

Applications for external courses are made through the line management system and are directly related to the objectives set in their Appraisal review. The most common ones are focused on keeping abreast of subject developments. Other examples have included themes linked to whole school priorities such as AfL, literacy and behaviour management. Some include subject training for new courses such as BTEC qualifications in Sport, Music and Acting, or the new GCSE course in computing. We have also supported applications for staff to learn about raising the achievement of boys. 4 teaching assistants received training for the NVQ level 3 qualification, one attended training to assist in her new role as EAL coordinator.

The Warwick Training Forum provides weekly or fortnightly training on a wide range of topics that have also been identified as relevant by staff in the annual review. Presenters include staff currently working at The Warwick School, and range from extended outdoor education to Special educational needs with a wide range of teaching and learning topics in between. We have also invited consultants in from Babcock 4S to run workshops on literacy, PSHE and numeracy.

In the last 8 years The Warwick School has developed an innovative course aimed at the development of middle leaders. It engages them in new strategies for improving their leadership skills. The course covers 6 sessions over the year and participants are expected to present a school improvement task to the Headteacher at the end of the course. Recently due to our School Direct partnership with 2 local secondary schools we have opened up the course to 18 middle leaders across all 3 schools. A consultant from 4S delivers the units which range from understanding the similarities and differences between leadership and management to becoming a more effective leader. The school improvement task has been kept and participants are expected to reflect on their changing role and the research methods used.

Several staff completed leadership courses, including the NPQH. 3 staff completed courses on aspiring to senior leadership including Leadership Pathways (NCSL). 2 colleagues completed courses entitled, ‘Equal Access to Promotion and ‘Beyond Middle Leadership’ respectively, in 2011 and the latter is currently studying for an NPQSL qualification.
The Induction of Newly Qualified Teachers – A Testimonial

Kate Butler (Science Teacher)

My NQT Induction Journey...
I have had the privilege to undertake my NQT year at The Warwick School where I did my first PGCE placement at. I chose to undertake my induction year here because I was aware of the great induction programme and support that was offered to new teachers. It really helped that I had already spent 12 weeks at the school in my PGCE year as I was aware of who was who and how things worked at the school. I was also able to do 2 weeks cover work in the summer prior to my NQT year so I was able to get things like my laptop and passwords sorted. Luckily I was given my timetable so that over the summer I had some idea of the classes I would be teaching over my year.
I found the first term the toughest. Firstly, you are moving from teaching a PGCE timetable to an NQT timetable (10% less than a full timetable) and are also getting to know your classes. Planning and behaviour management were the biggest challenges for me at this time. I found that putting together a termly plan with a rough outline of what lessons you would be teaching and when, really helped me to manage my lesson planning time effectively. I also found it incredibly important to follow up and follow through with any behaviour issues in the class. I found phoning home to form a constructive relationship with parents as quickly as possible was one of the best ways to manage behaviour in lessons. That way, students know you mean business and will not let things go. Whilst the phoning used up every ounce of my time, it really has paid dividends for the rest of the year as you have the parents on board should there be any issues.
I found at the start of the year my NQT time was best spent observing teachers in the school – this allowed me to see different strategies and trial them with my classes. As I have developed over the year, I have become very aware of my strengths and areas to develop and I now focus my observations of others on exactly what I need as a teacher to develop further. I also strongly suggest that the NQT time is used to start collecting and putting together your PDP folder from day 1 – that way there is no last minute stress when assessment time comes around.
The NQT year provides an ideal opportunity to get involved with extracurricular activities. The best thing about these activities is building up a relationship with students outside of your subject lessons so you can see what they really enjoy. This can be used in your own lessons.
The induction programme and training offered at my school has been excellent and has really met my development needs including questioning techniques and assessment for learning. It can however feel quite challenging to go to each session almost weekly in the first couple of terms when you have so many other things you could be doing. But I would say it is definitely worth going as you will get something out of it. As NQT’s we were also lucky enough to attend the Surrey NQT conference – this
was a great opportunity to network and moan with other NQT's about how hard it can be but most importantly to take away new ideas to use in the classroom.

My mentor for the year was the same as my mentor for my PGCE year. His support and guidance has been exceptional over the year. He is very pragmatic in his approach to supporting me and focuses on the things that really need doing in order to complete induction. He is also a great source of inspiration for new ideas and strategies that I can use in my lessons to keep them fresh and engaging for my students.

My assessor had been my professional tutor when I was a PGCE student here. Our professional relationship has developed really well over the year. She provides exceptionally detailed feedback on my lessons and PDP, clearly demonstrating how much time and effort she puts into being my assessor. This makes all my hard work and effort really seem worth it as she is so appreciative and supportive. I couldn’t have asked for a better assessor!

Overall, I have really enjoyed my NQT year. It is tough but with the right team around you to support you, you will get through and the sense of achievement is immense.

Kate Butler (Science NQT)
Reigate School is larger than the average-sized secondary school and was designated a Teaching School in 2015. It is a non-selective school serving the local area and is always heavily oversubscribed. The school has exceeded the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards set by the government for attainment and progress.

“Reigate is an outstanding school where students make exceptional progress to reach very high standards from average starting points.”

*Ofsted 2012*

**Professional development** at Reigate School is outcome and learning-centred. We use our appraisal system to personalise CPD for individual staff in order to improve student outcomes. CPD takes a range of forms at Reigate:

**Teacher Training**

- The Induction of Newly Qualified Teachers
- Initial Teacher Training – in partnership with Brighton University and Equalitas
- In-service QTLS training with Reigate College and Canterbury University

**INSET & Training**

- Whole-school – learning and teaching focused
- Induction Professional Development Training
- Mentoring and coaching – informal and formal
- Joint programme with The Warwick and Oakwood Schools
- Early Professional Development Programme
- Bespoke training with specific departments and individuals

CPD is personalised to ensure we meet the needs of staff and all learners. We would welcome visits to the school to see our outstanding practice.
Testimonials from School Direct Trainees at The Warwick Partnership

Charlotte Glass (School Direct Trainee in English)

Having known for several years that I wanted a career in teaching, I found the choice of applying for a teacher training programme an easy one. However, with a few training routes now being offered, at first it seemed like a daunting process; I was quickly proved wrong through the application of the School Direct placement. Having researched into the direction it took, the clear opportunity for an inclusive school experience greatly appealed.

From the outset I was treated like any other member of staff, with responsibilities and expectations helping me to fully immerse myself into the school’s environment and culture. This was hugely beneficial, especially helping the relationship with my students who also recognised me as an equal member of the teaching team and not a trainee-student. The expectations of me were the same as a fully qualified teacher: INSET days, staff training evenings, parents’ evening and extra-curricular activities are just a few examples of the opportunities you have, to help fully engage and enjoy the career choice. Being treated in this manner meant that I immediately began to experience the rewarding role that a teacher has.

However, I was far from being alone with these new responsibilities and demands. The supportive team ensured I was never left panicking over the new experiences I encountered on a day-to-day basis. Thanks to my Professional Tutor and Mentor, I was able to receive continuous feedback and advice on how to further improve and better my teaching ability. My Mentor kindly ensured she was available any hour of the day, so that I did not feel unsupported or alone within this new role. If I stumbled upon a difficult or unfamiliar scenario, I knew that I could ask any member of the team to assist my understanding and actions, whilst still being able to maintain the professional role required for the placement.

In terms of my teaching and lesson planning, my placements ensured I was observed in every lesson: a daunting prospect at first, but one that proved extremely helpful and practical throughout my experience. After every lesson I received feedback and suggestions as to how to continually better myself and improve my teaching practice. My Mentor regularly helped guide and support my planning ideas, helping me to equip myself with not only the subject of English, but the wider school responsibilities and roles required of a teacher.

Not only did the school provide a vast assortment of extra training and opportunities, but the supporting University also ensured progress and improvement was taking place. By attending University one day a week, I was able to take the time to acknowledge the requirements of the course and receive extra instruction and methods that I could then adapt to my lessons. The University supplied a vast array of lectures and resources that deepened my understanding of the role, as well as offer talks from leading professional within the teaching institution.

Overall, this route has proved to be a challenging but enriching experience. The structure and support has ensured a stable pathway, alongside allowing an independently inclusive experience to learn and progress within.
Dr. Cate Waters (School Direct Trainee in Science)

The School Direct training route appealed to me for a number of reasons; it allowed me to have some choice with regard to the school that I was going to train in, I was able to meet the professional tutors at a teaching development event prior to visiting the school and I was able to meet my mentor, the students and other staff before applying for a place formally. This was important for me as a mature student.

Once on the programme I was present on the first staff-training day of the year. I was introduced to all the staff and learnt about important issues such as child safeguarding and the school’s vision. All this meant that as I began the process of learning how to teach I felt comfortable in the school and fully supported.

As a School Direct Trainee the school has been able to contribute to progressing my fuller development as a teacher. I have been involved with the school’s training programmes, school trips and clubs, as well as celebrations. As a Science Trainee I have found it really helpful to have the time to form good relationships with all the staff including the technicians and to benefit from their wealth of knowledge. I really have felt ‘part of the team’.

The school has also organised complementary placements in order that I can gain a broad base of experience in other schools and across all the Key Stages.

School Direct combines the school training with university based teaching. This involves a three-week induction period followed by one day a week at the university. The course covers specialist subject knowledge and educational theory. This makes it possible to gain a PGCE as well as QTS.

In conclusion, as a School Direct trainee you are able to benefit from all that the university has to offer. In addition you are able to meet the staff and students at the school in which you will be predominantly working prior to applying for a place. The school experience is fuller and you are able to develop strong relationships with many of the staff at the school; their experience and support has hugely enhanced my learning from and enjoyment of the year.